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ADVENTURES FOR TSR® ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

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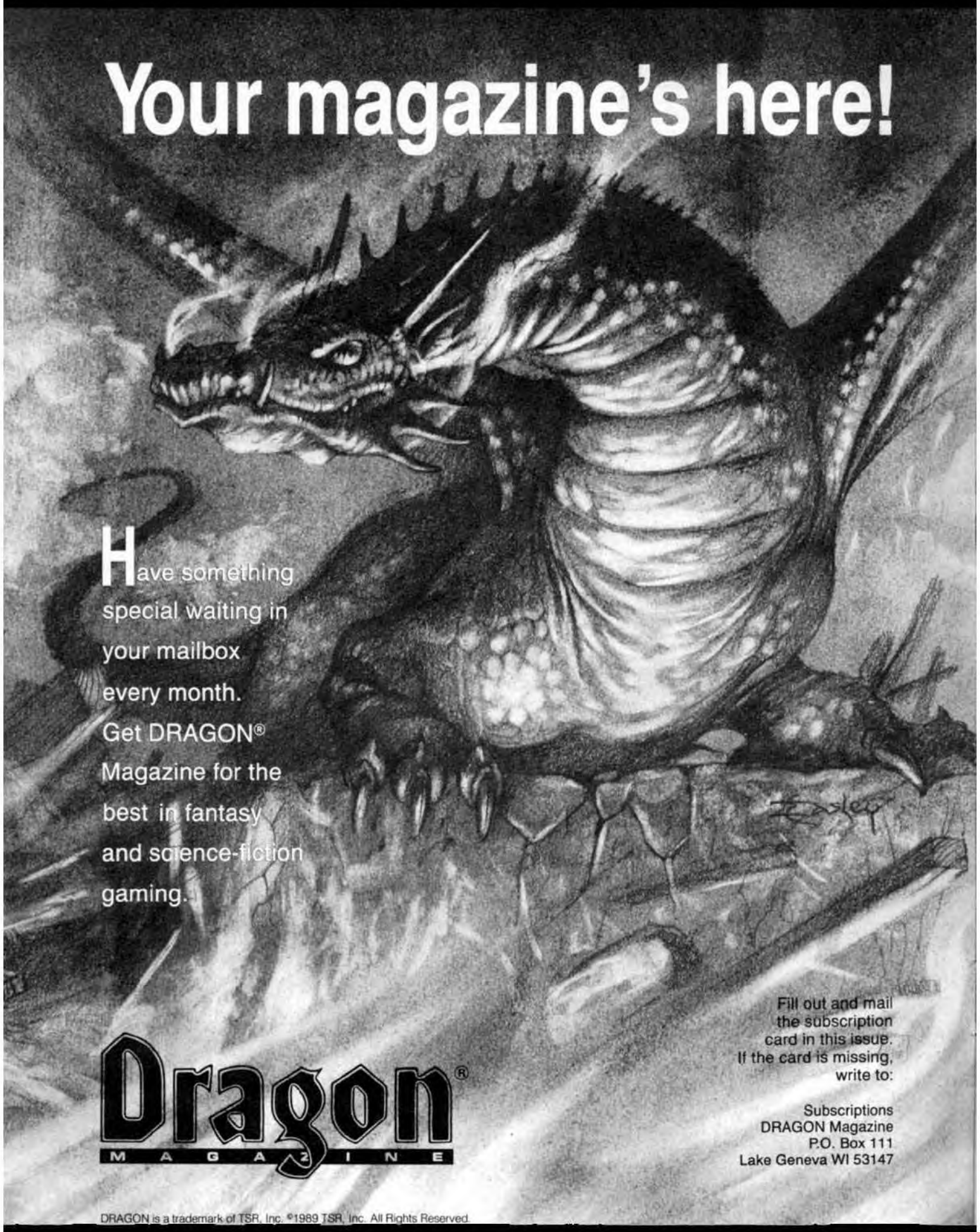

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Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR® ROLE-PLAYING GAMES MAY/JUNE 1989 ISSUE #17

COVER: Dragons have long memories. As Carol Heyer's cover painting for this issue shows, Flame is back, and he's out for revenge.

Abbreviated Thoughts

A reader new to role-playing games wrote us to say that parts of DUNGEON® Adventures didn't make sense to him. "I had no idea what all those abbreviations meant!"

Sometimes, those of us who have been role-playing for a long time forget that we use a bewildering set of acronyms and abbreviations that can be daunting to a novice. So, to make life a bit easier for newcomers, here are some of the most common abbreviations used in our magazine.

AD&D®	ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game
D&D®	DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game
DM	Dungeon Master (the game's storyteller and referee)
PC	player character (the player's alter ego)
NPC	nonplayer character (run by the DM)

The following are AD&D game hardback books:

DMG	*Dungeon Masters Guide*	PH	*Players Handbook*
MM1	*Monster Manual*	MM2	*Monster Manual II*
FF	FIEND FOLIO® tome	OA	*Oriental Adventures*
WSG	*Wilderness Survival Guide*	DSG	*Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*
MOP	*Manual of the Planes*	UA	*Unearthed Arcana*
DL	*DRAGONLANCE® Adventures*	GA	*GREYHAWK® Adventures*
LL	*Legends & Lore* (formerly the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ cyclopedia		

With the introduction of the new AD&D 2nd Edition rules, we'll be using the abbreviation 2ED to designate new volumes (for example, the AD&D 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook* will appear as "PH-2ED"). In the AD&D 2nd Edition game, all of the monsters will be presented in a loose-leaf format, so there will be only one *Monstrous Compendium* (abbreviated MC), to which you will add new pages as they are released.

Each monster and NPC encountered in an adventure is generally accompanied by a paragraph of statistics. Here are some of the abbreviations used:

AC	armor class	Dmg	damage per attack
MV	movement	SA	special attacks
HD	hit dice	SD	special defenses
hp	hit points	AL	alignment
#AT	number of attacks per round		

In the future, we'll give the new abbreviations for AD&D 2nd Edition character classes.

Barbara G. Young

The Readers **LETTERS** 2

Randal S. Doering **THE PIT**
(AD&D levels 3-5) Adventurers are more than welcome—they are nourishment! 4

Richard Emerich **THE HUNT IN GREAT ALLINDEL**
(AD&D levels 4-7) A treasure vault without guards or traps—can it be true? 16

Greg Kramer **THE WAITING ROOM OF YEN-WANG-YEH**
(AD&D-OA levels 5-6) Your mission is to recover the bones of a long-dead noble. But he isn't ready to give them up yet. 31

Grant Boucher **OUT OF THE ASHES**
(AD&D levels 8-12) Slain in disgrace, reborn in fury, armed to the teeth: Flame returns! 42

Vol. III, No. 5

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"Avoid pride, illustrious hero. For a little while you will be at the peak of your strength; but it will not be long before sickness or the sword, or the hand of fire, or the raging sea, a thrust of the knife, a whizzing arrow, or hideous dotage, or failure and darkening of the eyes, will plunder you of your might."

King Hrothgar, to Beowulf
Beowulf, translated by David Wright

LETTERS

Fun with Statistics

I'm strongly in favor of fewer D&D® game modules appearing in this magazine. Not that D&D players don't have rights, but I look at it from a proportional view. I remember reading that approximately 95% of the readers prefer AD&D® game modules. Well, with DUNGEON® magazine putting out six scenarios per issue, with one D&D adventure per issue, that's 17% of the magazine for 5% of the readers. If one D&D scenario appeared every two issues, as I believe they should, only 8% of the modules would be D&D material, which is still generous to D&D players and fairer to the masses.

Brett Knappe
Racine, Wisconsin

In the editorial of issue #15, I should have said that 95% of readers responding to our survey enjoy *AD&D adventures; I said "prefer," and that is misleading. As I said later in that paragraph, 35% of our readers responded by checking that they enjoy D&D adventures. This was not an either/or choice; many people play both game systems.*

For that 35% of our readers, we have published 11 D&D adventures in 17 issues, about 13% by adventure count. That's why we keep getting letters begging for more D&D material. I would like to run one D&D adventure each issue. We have run between four and seven adventures an issue, averaging just over five per issue. One D&D module out of five makes 20%, still under the 35% of our readers who desire them, but much better than we have been doing. Now we only need to get enough quality D&D adventures to support such a plan.

Tough But Fair

It has been common practice in most of the campaigns I've ever played to always take the recommended levels in any module with a grain of salt. Always look to the high end, as player numbers greatly affect the outcome of things. Most groups are fairly small; I've never been with a group larger than eight persons, but some modules can refer to groups with more players.

I am talking about this as I've just finished reading Howard Leroy Davis's letter in issue #15. I don't know how big his group was, or what their levels, disposition, and equipment consisted of. What I can say is that "The Ruins of Nol-Daer" [issue #13] was not a death trap, as his letter might imply.

My group sustained some damage in rooms 30-32. One character was critically wounded, and the group chose to rest at this point. The group consisted of an 8th-level paladin, a 9th-level cleric, a 5th-level fighter/magic-user, a 4th-level illusionist/thief, an 8th-level magic-user, a 9th-level fighter, a 7th-level barbarian, and a 5th-level cleric/ranger. I don't see this group as a real power-house bunch, and I think McCleskey called it fairly close.

The first death occurred when the illusionist/thief decided to do his own thing and got caught alone with huecuvas in room 35. His death was due to his own stupidity, but he was saved by a timely *elixir of life.*

The party wisely retreated from the enounter in room 48 and left the crypt for a later time, when they tried to get below the castle in other ways. There's no law that says adventurers have to clean out every room and kill all the creatures they find. When the party was up to clearing out the undead, they went back, but that was after they discovered the entrance to the caves. After resting up from the upper levels, they proceeded to the lower levels.

I have to say that the worst thing the party encountered in this adventure was a deadly enemy in the form of the cambion MacDaer. The party learned of his existence only after they talked to the dwarves they'd freed. MacDaer never revealed himself to them, and now patiently waits for his chance to continue his efforts after the party has gone, and to plot revenge.

I won't lie and tell you that the party had an easy time with the dragons, but the female was weak, and the male had some bad luck. Two characters bought it in the ensuing fight (never, never charge a live dragon). However, with the group triumphant, these characters were *raised* in due time.

I don't know what kind of group Mr. Davis plays with, but my party thought "The Ruins of Nol-Daer" was challenging and rewarding. They're still looking over their shoulders for a demon they've never seen. I let them know he eagerly wants to make their acquaintance. Paranoia is great for party unity.

Chris Champagne
Reno, Nevada

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THE PIT

BY RANDAL S. DOERING

What's waiting for you at the bottom?

Artwork by Richard Bennett

Randal tells us that he has just finished writing a manual for a computer company, the most arduous piece of writing he's ever done. "Write and revise again and again. . . . It was tougher than writing for you, Barbara!" He's also still hard at work on a fantasy novel, which he says is easier to write because he can ramble on and on. This is Randal's second appearance in DUNGEON® Adventures, and he's waited to see his module in print for a very long time.

"The Pit" is an AD&D® adventure designed for 4-6 player characters of 3rd-5th level (about 20 levels in all). A cleric would certainly save the party much trouble. The PCs should have magical weaponry which will allow them to hit those monsters that can be damaged only by such weapons.

The PCs may become involved in this adventure by stumbling across the Pit while on an overland trek, or they may have found a map on a previous adventure which directs them to the adventuring area. Such a map can be given as part of a creature's hoard, sold to the PCs by a mysterious NPC, or found in a PC cleric's church. No actual area map is provided (although the DM can design one), so the Pit can be placed wherever it makes the most sense in each individual campaign world.

The adventure is written for jungle terrain but will fit into any heavily forested region. The *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* may prove useful in running this adventure.

Adventure Background

The following information assumes that the PCs have found a map leading to the Pit in an earlier adventure and have had time and means to delve into the background of the place before they go in. Even this little information should not be given away. The PCs should have to consult sages with backgrounds in cults and religions or resort to spells such as *legend lore* just to get this much. No one knows exactly what lies in this specific hidey-hole, but the following story should give the PCs enough information to allow them to make intelligent equipment and spell choices.

Read or paraphrase the following to the players after their PCs have completed the necessary research:

About 200 years ago, priests of an evil deity of minor power became very unpopular for their vile ceremonies and cruel ways, and they were hunted nearly to extinction by the heroes of the day. Some wicked priests managed to escape justice, however, hiding like rats and waiting for the day when they could return and seek their former power. Knowing that their ideas would die with them, these clerics took unsavory steps to lengthen their life spans, giving up their mortality and assuming the mantle of the damned, the undead. In a few years the witch-hunts ended, and it was held that all of the major figures of the cursed religion had perished. Legends persisted about them, but with the passing of centuries most of the stories faded away.

The map you have found apparently leads to one such hiding place of this dreaded cult.

For the Dungeon Master

This adventure takes place in an outpost of the priests of the evil demigoddess Imbindarla. About 200 years ago, Imbindarla's cult flourished in this area, and her servants cast their depravity far and wide. They summoned wicked things from the outer planes, sacrificed helpless victims, and dabbled with the undead.

Then one of the high priests of the cult (not the one encountered herein) made a grave error and ransacked the temple of a good-aligned deity. Reprisal was fast and bloody. Half a dozen religious orders banded together and attacked Imbindarla's temples and shrines, killing everyone and everything they found there and razing the buildings. All of the teachings of the religion were forbidden, and its religious texts were burned.

Imbindarla's worshipers who survived the first attacks realized that their order was doomed unless they could hide and return at a later date, and they built bolt-holes to help them realize this dream. Most of the bolt-holes were found and wiped out, but a few managed to remain hidden, the priests within waiting for a time when they could return to the surface and begin their sacrifices anew. The Pit is one such bolt-hole.

The caves of the Pit are roughly carved, with 8'-high ceilings in all areas except where otherwise noted. While the stone is soft, the tunnels are well shored with preserved hardwoods and will not randomly collapse. Area-affect spells have a chance of causing a cave-in equal to 1% per hp damage done by the spell. Cave-ins affect the area of the spell only, not any adjoining areas as noted in the *DSG*. Thus, a collapse in these tunnels and rooms is a local event. Damage for PCs caught in cave-ins is given on page 40 of the *DSG*.

All underground areas are dark and cold. Because Imbindarla is a goddess of the night (her spheres of influence are darkness and necromancy) and draws strength from darkness, the Pit has been enchanted so that all lights, even such potent illumination as a *continual light* spell, are reduced to the equivalent of feeble torchlight (with a 30' radius). This powerful effect cannot be dispelled, but if the idol in the temple (area 9) is destroyed, all illumination will again work normally here.

The Guardian of the Dais

Whether the PCs find the Pit by accident or by following a map, their first encounter with the place will be with the above-ground dais which was placed here to mark the location of the underlevel (for other worshipers of Imbindarla to find).

This massive 90'-diameter dais rises 7' above the undergrowth. It is made of soft limestone blocks taken from the tunnels as they were dug by the hapless slaves of the priests. Barely visible through the lichen and mosses around the rim of the dais are carven skulls and sacrificial scenes, but these are obscured by time and are too faint to make out clearly. The carvings are not magical in any way and are simply identification for other followers of Imbindarla's twisted religion. The PCs will not be able to make sense of them without having extensive knowledge of that cult. The dais is so overgrown with jungle vegetation that neither of the trapdoors is evident until stepped on or until the plants are removed.

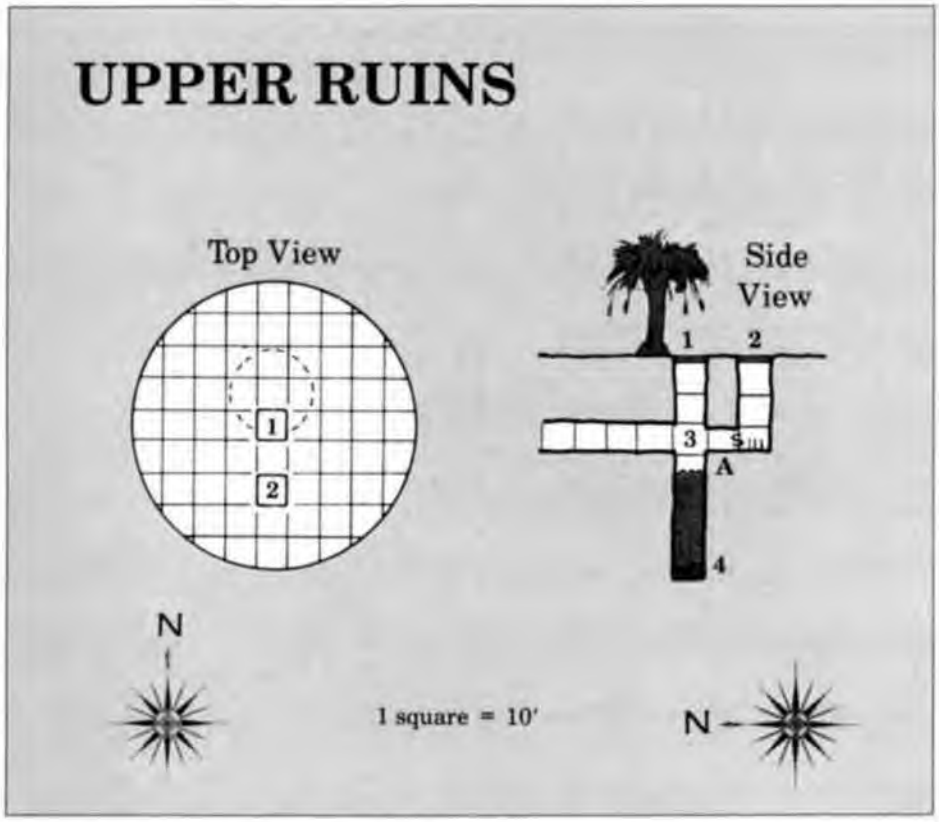
The dais is guarded by a huge, ancient (200-year-old) hangman tree, the twisted form of a specimen brought here and adapted to the tropical environment by the priests. It is somewhat shorter than it should be (30' tall) but is no less powerful.

This plant grows just north of the central trapdoor on the dais and cannot be readily seen amongst all the normal trees which grow around and beneath it. It waits for the PCs to get within 20' before using its hallucinatory perfume to appears as a treant. It asks the PCs their business and acts friendly, hoping to lure them closer. The plant has a 15' reach with its appendages (dotted circle on the Upper Ruins map) and attacks as soon as all the PCs are within reach.

Hangman tree: AC 3 (trunk)/5 (appendages); MV 2'/hour; HD 1 hp/year; hp 200 for trunk, hp 20 per appendage; # AT 3 (9 appendages); Dmg 1-3; SA strangle for four rounds, then 3-12 hp per round from acid; SD hallucinatory perfume, 95% magic resistance; lightning and electricity do double damage, cold produces dormancy, darkness slows tree to half efficiency; AL N(E); speaks halting Common; MM2/74.

The PCs have little hope of killing such a potent creature, but they can certainly remove its appendages. The hangman tree fights until it loses six appendages or until the PCs threaten it with fire. It then allows the PCs to do as they wish, not bothering them unless they attack it again. Once the PCs go underground, the tree begins to move over the main trapdoor (taking seven hours to do so) preventing the PCs from coming up this way. (The tree's roots sink into the soil-covered dais and spread out about a foot underground. They do not sink into the stone, thus allowing the plant to pull up its roots and shift position from time to time.) PCs attempting to exit from below must break through the trapdoor (AC 3; 50 hp) and burn the plant for 25 hp to get it to move, and even then it takes the tree seven hours to get off the trapdoor. The PCs can also escape through the southern trapdoor (see area 2).

The hangman tree protects these ruins because of a *curse* which was placed on it when it was a sapling, before its magic resistance was so high. If it leaves the dais, its noose vines will wither and die, leaving the creature unable to capture food and forcing it to face a long process of starvation (it can photosynthesize, but not enough to generate all of its food). So the plant sits where the priests told it to, guarding the ruins according to their wishes and dimly hoping that someday they will return to remove their *curse* and set it free. It does not know that *curses* can be dispelled, so it will not try to get the PCs to perform this service, and it is too stupid to realize that it can fulfill the conditions of the *curse* without guarding the ruins at all. It could just sit here and leave trespassers alone, with-



out breaking the *curse* conditions in the least — but it would still want to catch beings for food.

Encounter Key

1. Main Trapdoor. The main trapdoor is made of hard stone 4" thick, hinged on the northern side. It lifts open by means of a stone ring if two people pull with a total of 30 points of strength. The trapdoor opens only 45° due to the hangman tree's roots, and shuts unless wedged open. If the PCs do not kill the hangman, it removes wedges with its roots before moving on top of the trapdoor.

Beneath the trapdoor is a 10'-square shaft with a corroded bronze ladder on the eastern wall. The shaft leads down to area 3 and from there into the dungeon complex. The ladder creaks and groans when weight is put on it, but it will not break.

2. Southern Trapdoor. This trapdoor is hinged on the north side and is made of 4"-thick hard stone. It opens downward when 200 or more pounds are placed upon it, dropping the unfortunate(s) into a pit full of spears (6d6 hp damage from the fall, plus damage from 0-5 (1d6–1) spears for 1-6 hp each). Falling persons may make dexterity checks on 1d20 to grab vines and save themselves, taking no damage if successful. This trapdoor originally sprang shut after being triggered, but its mechanism has long since rusted away, allowing the fallen door to hang down. The hangman tree does not know that this pit also leads into the ruins and will not bother to protect it from intrusion.

The remains of six humans and several animals lie among the stakes, aged to crumbling bone. The undead from the ruins have picked the corpses clean of valuables.

A secret door on the north wall is a bit loose and is found at double chances. It opens by a locked handle, which can be picked and turned, or the PCs can elect to break it down (AC 4, 20 hp). Only blunt weapons can be used for this effort; sharp weapons may cause damage, but they must save vs. crushing blow with each strike or break. Sharp weapons can be used to pry the door open on a *bend bars* roll, but failure automatically snaps the weapon (magical weapons have a 25% chance per plus to save). The door is easily seen and opened from the other side.

2A. Cold Spot. As the PCs squeeze into this narrow passage, the temperature drops sharply. The water on the walls and floor is frozen here. This is a haunted area, strange but harmless. The cold spot is the psychic residue generated by the death throes of a slave who attempted to escape these ruins. That unfortunate was caught and killed as he tried to open the secret door, and this place has been cold ever since. No magic can be detected here, but PCs with any form of psionic ability can hear faint screaming in the coldest part of the corridor. An *exorcise* spell successfully cast here against the 5th level of power can remove this effect.

This passage joins area 2 to area 3 and gives access to the dungeon complex.

3. Illusory Floor. Two archways lead out of this area, one to the north and one to the west. The floor looks solid enough here, but it is an illusion. Anyone stepping onto this area must roll for surprise (4 in 6 chance of being surprised) or fall through, disappearing into the pit at area 4. Those PCs not surprised may roll a dexterity check on 1d20 to grab the ledge and avoid a swim. Any PC grabbing for the ledge drops all hand-held items into the water, whether the dexterity check is successful or not. The floor is a *permanent illusion* and does not disappear when people fall through it, though it can be dispelled as 14th-level magic.

The PCs can enter the dungeon through either of the archways. A 1'-wide ledge runs around the pit, at the level of the illusory floor, even with the bottoms of the archways. The ledge is wide enough to walk on if the PCs slow to half their normal movement rates.

4. Watery Grave. The fall into this pit does no damage (the water level is only 7' below the floor level), though the PCs must make dexterity checks on 1d20 when they hit the water or lose all hand-held items. See the *DSG*, pages 12-13, for details on swimming and drowning. Note that an armored or heavily encumbered PC who is surprised can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to his constitution score divided by six (divided by three if not surprised). After breath is gone, constitution checks ensue as per page 12 of the *DSG*. Removing packs takes one round; stripping off

armor takes 10 rounds minus the armor type (i.e., chain mail is armor type 5, so removing it takes five rounds).

At the bottom of the pit are the remains of dozens of humans and animals as well as several feet of garbage. There is nothing of value here except for any items the PCs have dropped. Such items take 1-4 rounds to find if they are large (such as a shield), 9-12 rounds if they are small (dagger-size), and 31-50 rounds if they are tiny (ring-size). A *detect magic* spell cuts searching for magical items to a quarter of the rolled times.

5. Magic-user's Quarters. Through this archway is a small, dark room. Its furnishings have long since rotted into piles on the floor, leaving only disquieting bas-reliefs depicting odious sacrifices carved on the walls. On the ceiling in the northwest corner is a small ball of bubbling white mist. Sudden movement from the far left corner heralds an attack as a black humanoid leaps toward the PCs!

Not all of Imbindarla's servants were clerics; some were magic-users. This particular servant was faithful to the cult and did as much for it as any cleric, so Imbindarla granted him undead status upon his death.

Thosat (ghast): AC 4; MV 15"; HD 4; hp 20; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-8; SA paralysis, stench; SD immune to *sleep, charm* spells; cold iron does double damage; AL CE; MM1/43. Although its spell books long ago turned to dust, this creature remembers two spells — *burning hands* (for 4 hp damage) and *mirror image* — that may each be cast once per day. Thosat employs these spells against the PCs at the 4th level of experience. This ghast's power to throw spells is a special condition granted by Imbindarla.

The creature is dark in color because Thosat was dark skinned when alive. This could confuse the PCs for a few moments (they might believe it to be a wight), until it gets close enough for the PCs to smell it.

If this creature is attacked, the juju zombie from area 6 moves to aid it in three rounds. Both monsters can be driven away by magical light, but they will follow the PCs and wait for a chance to attack.

In the remains of an iron box in Thosat's corner are 61 sp, 9 ep, and a 600-gp jade tiara. A bone tube in a pile of rot (which used to be a bed) holds a scroll with the spell *unseen servant.* The mist in the northwest corner is the Head Priest's scrying device, explained in room 8.

6. Thief's Surprise. This small room is dark and smells like rotting flesh. Its walls are covered with disgusting murals and, while the furnishings have rotted to powder, there is a large tangle of human bones in the southeastern corner. Above this heap, on the ceiling, is a small patch of rolling white mist. Something is stumbling toward you from the southern part of the room — a half-rotted female human with green fire for eyes.

This unfortunate was not a cleric at all, but a very clever and deceptive thief who sought to rob Imbindarla's cult of its treasures and be gone before anyone found out. She worked her way into the cult over a period of years, cultivating the friendship of the Head Priest of this particular sect until she was ready to steal his treasures and flee.

Then disaster struck, and the priests of several other major religions joined their forces to rid the world of Imbindarla's sect. The thief agreed to join the Head Priest and a few others in their underground shelter, hoping to wait a few weeks and then make off with the treasures.

But the Head Priest was cautious, and the thief could not even find out where he kept the treasures, much less figure out how to steal them and get out of here. She could not escape because of the hangman tree which grew outside (it sat on the trapdoor in those days, to prevent searchers from finding this place), and in the cold darkness she lost her grip on her sanity. Then the food ran out.

The Head Priest decided that survival depended upon giving up mortality for the status of undead, and he helped Thosat (from area 5) complete the gruesome self-sacrifice which granted him that status. The thief, mad with hunger and still looking for a way to steal the sect's treasures, demanded a similar ceremony be performed on her. The Head Priest agreed.

Imbindarla was not generous with her. The deity was not fooled by the thief's con games and twisted her wishes for immortality. Instead of granting her power, the deity drained her life and soul, leaving a rotten shell in constant agony. By the time the thief recovered from the process, the Head Priest was gone, having left for area 18 and his own final transformation. The ambitious thief was now in a state worse than any imaginable, quite dead but unable to die and in constant pain, which only the destruction of her body could release.

Thief (juju zombie): AC 6; MV 9"; HD 3+12 (attacks as 6-HD monster); hp 29; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, piercing and blunt weapons do half damage, immune to various spells and attack powers, fire does half damage, turned as a spectre; AL N(E); MM2/131.

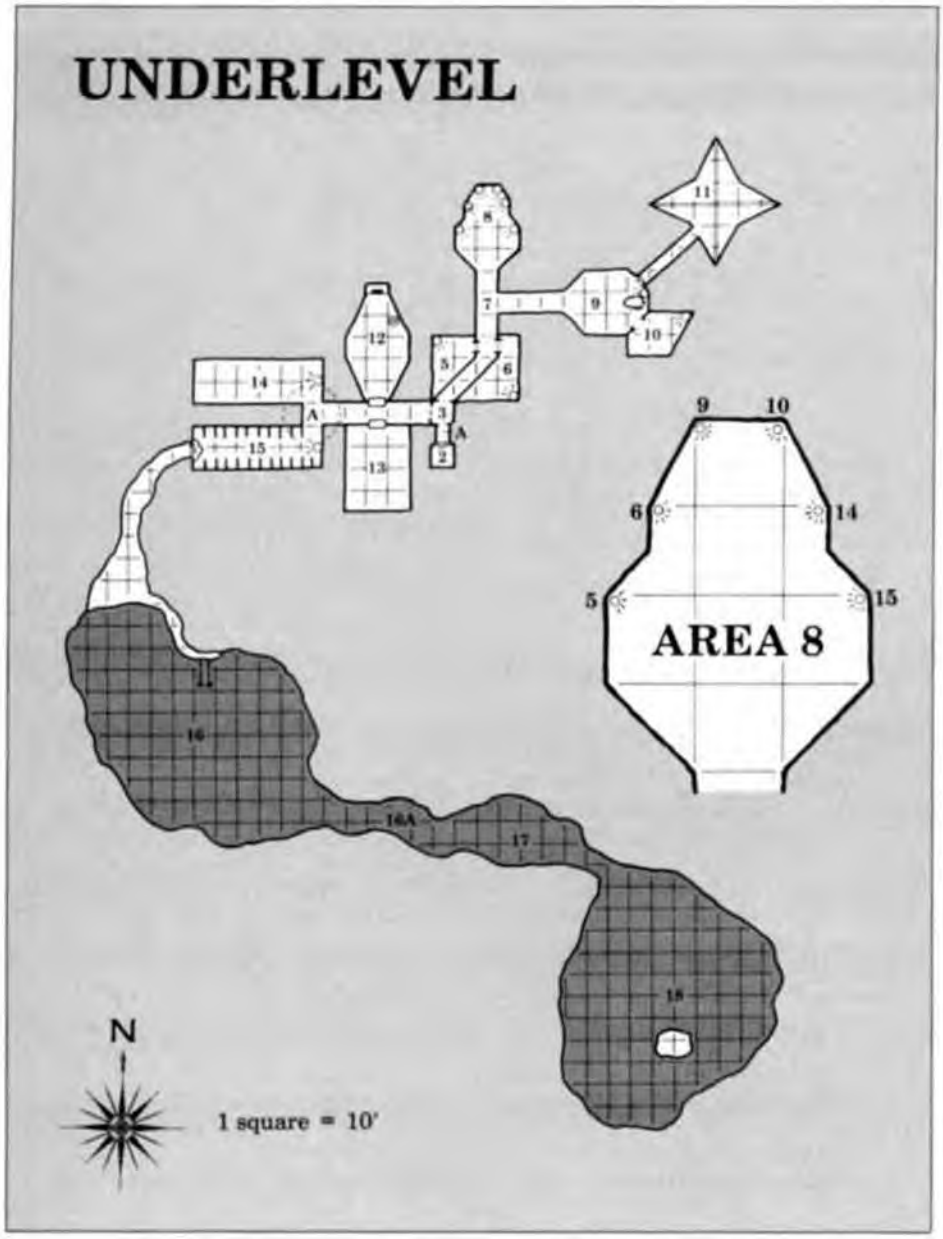
This vicious creature is totally mad and will attack one individual until that person is dead before choosing a new victim and doing the same. It attacks PCs bearing magical weapons first and never relents, seeking either its own destruction or the deaths of all who oppose it (it doesn't really care which). The ghast in area 5 will come to the zombie's aid, arriving in three rounds if the PCs attack the former thief.

One of the human bones in the southeast corner is a *wand of magic missiles* with 11 charges. The command word is "Homer," written in archaic Common on the wand. The mist in the corner is explained in area 8.

7. Wind. A blast of freezing wind howls down the hall and douses all torch lights, throwing the party into darkness. Before anyone can move, the PCs hear something huge begin to stamp toward them from the side corridor!

There is nothing actually here; the footfalls are the result of a delayed-effect *audible glamer* spell. PCs swinging weapons in the dark may hit their friends (50% chance/swing). The PCs can relight their torches and lanterns without difficulty. This event happens only once, then the effect is expended.

8. Master's Room. This oddly shaped room was once a finely appointed chamber, but now it is ruined. Piles of garbage on the floor denote furnishings, and nails for tapestries stick from the walls. The walls are covered with bas-reliefs depicting brutal sacrifices and worship of some creature with masses of tentacles for a body. In the six northernmost corners of the room, 5' off the floor, are 3'-diameter bubbles of whirling white mist. Carved into the northern wall of the room, above the ruins of the master bed, is some sort of puzzle or riddle. Hanging on a brass peg above this is a silver necklace bearing a large octagonal sapphire.



This room once belonged to the Head Priest. However, the Head Priest is not here (being in area 18 instead), so the PCs are free to look around.

The mists were the Head Priest's means of keeping track of his underlings and checking out alarms in the dungeon. Each is attuned to a different room, as shown on the expanded view of area 8. The mists remain unfocused until the key (the necklace on the wall) is touched to a bubble. Then the mist clears to show a view of the appropriate room (even if the room is dark, it appears to be well lit). The PCs can look as long as they like; the spheres revert to mist only when touched a second time by the necklace. The mist spheres are dispelled as 15th-level magic and are impervious to any other spell effects. They can be used any number of times per day.

The necklace-key also opens the secret doors in areas 9 and 15, as well as the glass case in area 9. It is magical and radiates evocation magic.

Getting the key is a bit complicated, however, for it is trapped. Removing it from the wall without solving the riddle summons a dretch. The dretch cannot use its ability to summon a type I demon, having been forbidden by its superiors to do so. It arrives in the center of this room one round after the necklace is removed from the wall and battles to the death.

Dretch: AC 2; MV 9"; HD 4; hp 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/2-5; SA spell powers; SD half damage from cold, electricity, and fire; 30% magic resistance; AL CE; MM2/38. Its powers are: *darkness* 5' radius (at will), *scare* (at will), *stinking cloud* (once per day), *telekinesis* (50 lbs., at will), and *teleport* (once per day). One power may be used per round.

The riddle is carved into the wall, and blood has been run into the grooves to give the letters a dark tone. When the PCs get within 5' of the wall, they can read the riddle:

> He who makes it does not want it.
> He who buys it cannot use it.
> He who uses it cannot see or feel it.

The general atmosphere of the Pit should stimulate the players to think of the answer: a coffin. A line is provided for the answer to be written under the riddle, but no utensil is offered. The PCs will have to use chalk, or charcoal from a torch; blood would also do nicely. If the correct answer is written on the line, the PCs can take the necklace without summoning the dretch. If anything other than the correct answer is written, the dretch appears and attacks.

9. Temple. This octagonal chamber is obviously a temple dedicated to some loathsome deity. There are black and red twisted candles burning in sconces in the corners, sending weirdly curled tendrils of smoke to the ceiling. The walls are covered with bas-reliefs of demons, monsters, and a powerful being or deity of amorphous shape. All are shown being worshiped by humans in the carvings.

At the far end of the room is a monstrous idol, carved of black and red stone and rendered in an abstract shape suggesting a formless body. At the base of this obscenity is a glass box, containing a thick book with deep blue binding. There is a metal seal set into the top of the box, a 2"-diameter circle with an octagonal depression in its center. In the corner behind the idol, on the ceiling, is a sphere of spinning white mist. An archway to the southeast leads into a dark area.

This is the complex's main temple to Imbindarla. The candles are kept alight by magic and cannot be blown out, though a *darkness* spell will put out one candle. There are eight candles, one in

each corner. The carvings show religious ceremonies from Imbindarla's religion and will disgust even the toughest PC.

The idol represents Imbindarla and is made of bloodstone. While it is worth a fortune (about 125,000 gp), it is magical and evil, causing ill fortune to anyone who possesses any piece of it. This ill fortune takes the form of -1 on "to hit" rolls, damage, and saving throws, and ends when the fragment is thrown away or destroyed. Destroying the idol is worth 500 xp to those of good or neutral alignment. If the idol is destroyed, the party's lights will work normally in the Pit.

The glass box is unbreakable and will not respond to *knock* or similar opening spells; only the key from area 8 will open it. Attempting to force it in any way (including damaging spells) summons three manes demons to attack.

Manes demons (3): AC 7; MV 3"; HD 1; hp 7, 5, 3; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, various combat and spell immunities; AL CE; MM1/17. These creatures fight until destroyed but do not re-form themselves.

The box contains the *Serpin Lexicon*, a book of dark magic used by Imbindarla's cult to summon all sorts of monstrous creatures. The spells contained in this foul tome, as well as its other powers, are given in a special section at the end of the adventure. Destroying this book is worth 1,500 xp to good or neutral PCs.

The book's greatest power is preserving the Head Priest. If the book is destroyed, his soul will begin its trip to the Abyss, where it belongs. As a result, the skeleton at area 18 will not be able to undergo its transformation. It remains a tough skeleton, which the PCs should be able to beat fairly easily.

If the book is left in one piece, the PCs will have to face an increasingly powerful Head Priest at area 18 and will not be able to permanently destroy the creature. The only other possible use to the party in keeping the book is that it might summon extraplanar creatures in area 11 (see that room for details).

The secret door in the northeast corner is very well hidden and seen only if looked for, at normal chances. It opens by means of the sapphire key from area 8 or by a *knock* spell. If the PCs decide to beat it down, treat it as AC 3 with 30 hp. Weapons are not made for smashing stone doors, and they should have to save vs. crushing blow with every hit or be ruined. The mist is the Head Priest's scrying device; see area 8.

10. Meditation Chamber. There are no candles here, and no light from the temple passes the archway (the PCs need to make light). There are no furnishings in this small chamber, nor are the walls carved. There is a pile of rotted material in the center of the room, ancient rugs or some such objects. In the northeast corner of the ceiling is a ball of swirling white mist about 2' in diameter.

The clerics came here to meditate if thoughts troubled them or their concentration was too poor to go directly into prayer at area 9. The rotted material is indeed former rugs, but this is all that is here. The mist is the scrying device of the Head Priest, as explained in area 8.

11. Summoning Chamber. The secret door opens into a corridor which is barely wide enough for one person. Puddles of water dot the floor, and cave insects scurry about. Water drips and echoes hauntingly from the irregular ceiling 15' above. Only 10' into this corridor is the skeleton of an abomination, a winged humanoid with huge claws and teeth, which must have stood 9' or 10' high in life. The bones are crumbling and have apparently been here for a very long time.

These are the bones of a tarry demodand, the guardian of area 11. It was summoned here by the Head Priest and kept by binding spells. The demodand was ordered to guard this passage from anyone or anything that attempted to pass, but nothing ever came. When its 100-year term of service expired, its physical form ceased to function and its spirit returned to Tarterus.

Even when the PCs pass through the archway at the end of the corridor, they cannot clearly see the room beyond. Thick gray mist fills this chamber, making lights flicker fitfully. Horrid shadows flit about, moaning and hissing softly. Occasionally, something tugs at a PC's sleeve, but when the adventurer whirls around nothing is there.

The floor of the chamber is carved in elaborate patterns, and a thick blue line runs north and south in the southern part of the room. There is no way to tell how large this room is.

This is the summoning chamber, where the priests called to other-planar creatures and brought them here for all sorts of wicked purposes. The blue line on the floor represents the plane of elemental Water. It meets a red line (representing the plane of elemental Fire) which also runs north/south but in the northern half of the room. A brown line (for the plane of elemental Earth) runs from west to east in the western half of the room, and a light green line (plane of elemental Air) runs east/west in the eastern half of the room.

The lines and the elaborate symbols are responsible for keeping summoned creatures under control. If the PCs try reading any of the spells from the *Serpin Lexicon* in this room, the symbols on the floor burst into light, the mist dissipates, and a clear view of another plane (DM's choice of any inner or evil-aligned outer plane) becomes visible in the center of the room. Nothing will cross over from that plane, however, unless the DM wants to make the PCs a little more careful about using the book. The moans, groans, and tugging things in the mist have no power to harm the PCs.

12. Kitchen. The door to this room is rotted into pieces which hang from a fallen frame. The PCs can easily see into the chamber beyond, where rusting cooking utensils and the remains of metal pots and kettles hang on hooks on the near left wall. Past these is a crumbled china cabinet, its once-gorgeous crockery shattered when the cabinet finally gave way to age. To the right is a huge mound of mulch studded with mushrooms and mold, and beyond this is a 3'-diameter hole in the floor. At the far end of the chamber is a large fireplace.

When the clerics fled to this bolt-hole, they made accommodations for their stay. This is the former kitchen. Slaves would prepare food here to take to the clerics in their chambers. The 20'-deep hole in the eastern side of the room is the well, and a rotted bucket sits next to this. The room was made so large to allow firewood to be stored here, on the eastern side of the chamber (this is now the pile of mulch). Cooking was done on the western side of the room. The fireplace chimney once led to the surface, but it has collapsed and filled in. There is nothing of interest or danger to the PCs here.

13. Stores. This door was once iron-bound hardwood, but it has nearly rotted and rusted away. Enough is left to obscure the view into the room beyond, but the PCs can easily knock this door down.

Beyond is a rectangular room, 30' × 40' and nearly empty. A few piles of rotted matter lie about, evidence that perhaps food was once stored here. Otherwise, the room is plain.

Here is the storeroom, which was exhausted when the desperate priests decided to try for immortality as undead. The rotten stores are of no value or interest to PCs, but the inhabitants of this room are.

If the PCs stay in here for a few minutes, a small tan rat emerges from a hole in the south wall and runs toward the adventurers. It drops a pebble at their feet and scampers away to its hole. Any druid or ranger in the party will know this rodent to be a pack rat, a common nuisance but also a potential source of wealth. Pack rats do not attack, but they have an unusual habit: they like to collect small objects. When they find a small item, such as a pebble or a gem, they take the object to their nest and return with a replacement object.

Pack rat: AC 7; MV 15"; HD 1/4; hp 1; #AT nil; Dmg nil; AL N; see rat, ordinary, MM2/105.

The pack rat returns with 1-4 friends (same statistics) in 1-6 minutes. They approach the PCs without fear, looking for items to collect. Clever PCs can give the pack rats pebbles or other small, useless items and hope to get something interesting when the rat returns with an item in trade. Anyone who can *speak with animals* can explain what sorts of items the adventurers would like and save the party much time and trouble. If the PCs attack the rats, the rodents flee and will not return to trade with the party regardless of inducement.

Fifty of these little creatures live in a tunnel system which reaches all the way to the surface. They have scoured this ruin for interesting objects and have quite a collection in their tunnels and homes (which are far too small for the PCs to get at). Each time a PC offers a pack rat an item, it returns in 1-4 rounds with a replacement. Most of these replacements (75%) are similar garbage — pebbles and the like — but 25% are items of value. When one of these is indicated, roll 1d10 and consult the following table:

1. 1 cp
2. 1 sp
3. 1 ep
4. 1 gp
5. 1 pp
6. a gem, base value 1 sp (25)
7. a gem, base value 1 gp (20)
8. a gem, base value 5 gp (18)
9. a gem, base value 10 gp (15)
10. a random potion (4)

There are 11-30 of each type of coin and as many gems and potions as noted in the parentheses (roll potions randomly as they are found). The DM should keep careful track of how many valuables the PCs get ahold of, making sure that they do not find too much (after all, this is a pretty easy way to make some money and find magic).

The rats have only one bad habit: they will search the PCs if the party is so foolish as to sleep in this room. The rats take material components, gems, coins, and anything else of tiny size they can find. Getting these items back should be possible, but not without a lot of trouble.

13A. Darkness. There is a *continual darkness* spell cast at this intersection, with an area of effect as shown by the dotted line on the Underlevel map. Once, the spell's diameter was much greater, but with Imbindarla's fall from power and the effects of time, the spell is fading. A *light, continual light,* or *dispel magic* spell (vs. 7th-level magic) will be sufficient to destroy this darkness and allow normal lights to work again. Otherwise, the PCs will have to blunder about to find their way into areas 14 and 15 by touch.

14. Slave Room. The following description assumes that the PCs have light and are not exploring by touch. This long, narrow room smells vaguely of sweat and waste. Manacles hang on the walls, 12 sets in all, but these are nearly rusted away. On the eastern wall, near the ceiling, is a 2'-diameter sphere of white mist which bubbles and spins.

The complex had 12 slaves in the beginning, but after completing the construction they were used for periodic sacrifices and were soon gone. If the PCs stay here for a turn or so, they will see ghostly shades of the slaves, manacled to the walls and moaning. These spirits have no power to harm (and no game statistics) and are merely images of the past, but they might be unsettling to unprepared PCs.

Lying on the floor in the southwestern corner of the room is a small swan's feather imprinted with a rune which anyone can invoke. This is a *Quaal's feather token* (described on page 152 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide,* which turns into a magical boat when invoked. It belonged to the Head Priest, who dropped it here when he was preparing the last three slaves for his final trip to area 18 (those slaves are still in the complex, see area 17). He could not find the token when he was ready to leave, so he used a rowboat from the pier in area 16 (this vessel is now at the bottom of the lake in area 18). The PCs can use the *feather token* to follow the Head Priest's trail into area 18. The globe of white mist is the Head Priest's scrying device, as explained in area 8.

15. Skeletons. The following description assumes that the PCs get past the area of magical darkness and see the room before any attack takes place. If, however, the PCs stumble into this room by touch, the skeletons attack before the adventurers are out of the darkness. Each character in the darkness suffers a –4 penalty to all attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws, as well as a +4 penalty to armor class. On "to hit" rolls of less than 0, the PC has struck one of his friends instead of his intended target. The skeletons are not affected by the darkness.

Beyond the dark area lies a narrow rectangular room. On the eastern wall, near the ceiling, is a 2'-diameter sphere full of twisting white mist. A score of niches have been built against the walls, all but two holding the bony remains of a human. Past these cells, on the western wall, is a monstrous stone sarcophagus standing upright. As the PCs enter and look around, the skeletons begin to move, and the lid of the sarcophagus starts to wobble.

Skeletons (18): AC 7; MV 12"; HD 1; hp 8 (×2), 7 (×3), 6 (×2), 5 (×2), 4, 3 (×5), 2 (×2), 1; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD half damage from sharp or edged weapons; immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and cold-based spells; AL N; MM1/88.

These skeletons were created by the Head Priest from the remains of former worshipers and the cult's hapless slave-servants. These bony remains have not moved in several centuries and need two melee rounds to limber up, so the PCs have time to flee or take two free attacks. Only four skeletons at a time can be turned when they are in their niches, for that is all that can be seen at once. The skeletons battle until all are destroyed or the PCs back out of the room (the skeletons then return to their niches). They will reactivate immediately if the PCs return a second time.

The sarcophagus is occupied by the monster skeleton of an ogre. This creature opens its sarcophagus in four

rounds and is the last to arrive at an attack, battling until destroyed.

Ogre skeleton: AC 7; MV 12"; HD 4; hp 24; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (3-10 with magical club); SD half damage from sharp or edged weapons; immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and cold-based spells; turned as a ghast; AL N; see the *DMG,* page 41.

The ogre skeleton's weapon is a *club +2, sunray* which emits pure sunlight in a 30' radius for one turn per day. The command for this power is "Illumine," written in archaic Common on the weapon's haft. If the club's power to illuminate is used against the vampire in area 18, that creature immediately suffers 5-10 hp damage and releases any victim it holds. It flees to area 9 until the power fades. The vampire cannot regenerate sunlight damage until it is slain and reforms an entirely new body. See area 18 for more details on the vampire. The magical club is worth 1,000 xp and 5,000 gp. (Note: Unless the idol in area 9 is destroyed, the light-damping effects of the Pit will reduce the sunlight power of this weapon to a 15' radius.)

The back of the sarcophagus is a secret door, easily detected if looked for (double chances). The sapphire key from area 8 fits into an octagonal hole in the door, but the secret door will not open until the sarcophagus lid is closed again. The sarcophagus stands 8' high and 4' wide, so two PCs can squeeze into it when the lid is shut. A *knock* spell or 20 hp damage vs. AC 4 will also open the secret door, without using the key or closing the sarcophagus lid. Again, weapons are not made for damaging stone and require a saving throw after every hit to avoid breakage.

The globe of white mist near the ceiling is the Head Priest's scrying device and is explained at area 8.

16. Natural Cavern. The air beyond the secret door is much colder than the air in the halls and rooms of the ruin, and smells mustier. This area is natural, the limestone worked only in a few places and otherwise left alone. A narrow passage cuts sharply south and steeply downward, ending at a stony beach. The beach continues on to the left, twisting around the wall and out of sight. From this point, the PCs see a huge room filled with gently lapping water stretching farther than their lights can reach. The ceiling here is 20' high and is hung with stalactites. While the air in the cavern is stale, it is breathable.

If the PCs explore the beach, they find a human skull lodged in a hole in the limestone at the spot marked X on the map. Its eye sockets peer blankly at the party, but there is a rune or glyph of some sort, glowing dull red, written on its bony pate.

This *glyph of warding* is of a type not known to anyone in the party and is named "Caleb," the Alarm. It can be dispelled or erased as 7th-level magic, disappearing whether the spell was successful or not. If the PCs trigger this glyph, the Head Priest at area 18 is awakened and alerted to the PCs' presence. The glyph has no other function.

Inside the skull is a 5,000-gp platinum ring shaped like a turtle, with emeralds for its eyes. The ring was placed here to lull intruders into thinking that the glyph guarded something valuable.

The PCs can also follow the beach to the southeast and find the pier. Long ago there was a boat here, but the Head Priest took it on his final journey. Now the only way to follow the Head Priest is to swim (the water is cold enough to cause hypothermia, as described on page 42 of the *DSG)* or to use the *feather token* from area 14. The water is shallow (only about 12' deep in the center, 6' deep near the walls) and still.

The pier is rotting wood and is not safe. It cannot be burned (it is too rotten and waterlogged) and is not usable for making a boat or raft. Anyone walking onto it has a 5 in 6 chance of breaking through and falling into 10'-deep water, possibly drowning if armored or heavily encumbered. Any sort of testing will reveal the pier's weakness.

16A. Screaming. As the PCs pass this bend in the underground stream, they hear screaming, as if several people just ahead were in great pain.

These sounds are from harmless spirits, left from a brutal ceremony that took place at area 17. Like the cold spot at area 2A, this place radiates no magic and contains only leftover psychic residue from the slaves who were killed nearby. Psionic PCs hear the screams with horrible clarity and suffer wracking pains in their necks, in sympathy with the sacrificial victims. These pains quickly pass and do no damage to the PCs. This effect can be *exorcised* as a 1st-level entity; otherwise, it happens every time the PCs pass through here.

17. Zombies. As the PCs pass through this wide area of the underground stream, bubbles begin rising all around. The water surges upward in three places near the center of the cavern, as if something were rising from the bottom. Then three bodies, horribly bloated and rotten, break the surface. A hideous stink assails the adventurers as the bodies roll over and begin to paddle toward them.

These were the Head Priest's last three slaves and his final sacrifices to allow his change to undead form. They have been here nearly 200 years and were animated by the Head Priest to protect this passage from intruders.

Zombies (3): AC 8; MV 6"//3"; HD 2; hp 10, 9, 7; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and cold-based spells; always attack last; AL N; MM 1/103. Their long exposure to water has also allowed these zombies to take only half damage from fire-based attacks.

The zombies reach a boat in two rounds and climb aboard in another round. If anyone is leaning over the side to attack (using spells which require touch to activate, using small weapons such as knives or daggers, etc.), the zombies can haul him overboard on rolls of 5 over their needed "to hit" scores. The water is 18' deep here, so any encumbered PC going over the side could easily sink and drown. In addition, the zombies continue to attack sunken victims, suffering –4 on "to hit" and damage rolls. PCs in the water are also –4 to hit and to damage, and their armor classes are penalized by four. Unless a PC can move freely in water, dexterity bonuses to armor class are also lost (in addition to the +4 penalty). PCs pulled underwater by the zombies must make a dexterity check on 1d20 to avoid losing all hand-held items. These items can be recovered by diving, with the same times as given at area 4, but this water is much colder than the water at area 4, and divers here require a full hour to warm up after each dive.

The zombies move slowly and can be left behind by determined PCs. Turning is also effective, though both of these solutions leave the zombies behind to be dealt with on the way back.

18. Head Priest. The watery passage opens into another huge room, this one even larger than the last. Dripping water makes eerie noises in here, accenting the strange flickerings of the PCs' lights on the tossing waves. The ceiling in this cavern is nearly 30' high.

The PCs must paddle around to find the island in the center of this cave, for their lights will not reach farther than 30' (don't forget the ability of the Pit to dampen lights). If the idol in area 9 was destroyed, PCs with a bullseye lanthorn will be able to see the island from the mouth of this room. Other light sources will not quite reach, though once the PCs move 30' into the room, even torchlight will reveal the island.

When the central island becomes visible to the PCs, read the following aloud:

> There is an island ahead, a lump of barren limestone roughly 15' in diameter and jutting 2' feet above the water. A thick wooden pole sticks up from the center of the islet, standing 10' high. Chests and urns cluster around the base of this pole, chained to it with rusted chains.

If the PCs did not activate the glyph on the skull at area 16, add the following:

> On the western side of the islet is a skeleton, wedged in among the containers. These ancient bones are draped with rotten robes and appear to have once been someone important.

The skeleton is the Head Priest and is animated, though it is not a standard skeleton by any means.

If the PCs activated the glyph, the skeleton is now hiding in the water to the south of the islet. In this event, the creature waits for the PCs to start searching through the treasures, attacking the first person who comes near it. When attacking from the water, the skeleton surprises 5 in 6 times.

Skeleton of Head Priest: AC 4; MV 12"; HD 8+3; hp 30; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (bite); SA drain blood for 1-6 hp per round; SD half damage from sharp or edged weapons, turned as a vampire; S 18; AL CE; see the following and "The *Serpin Lexicon*" for more information.

If the skeleton hits, it locks its jaws onto the victim and begins to drain blood in the next round. This blood drain causes 1-6 hp damage per round and is automatic until the creature is destroyed or releases its victim. The only two ways to stop this draining are to either use the illumination power of the magical club from area 15 (driving the skeleton off) or to make a successful *bend bars* roll to pry the Head Priest's jaws from the victim. Only one PC can try to pry the jaws open per round, and this is the PC's entire action for that round.

If the PCs did not activate the glyph, the creature does not animate until the PCs attack it or step foot on the island. The skeleton can be turned as a vampire, as it was a favored servant of Imbindarla. The skeleton radiates intense magic of an unidentifiable sort.

The Head Priest, formerly a man named Umbra, was a devoted evil servant. When he asked for undead status, Imbindarla agreed to grant him minor power which could be increased over time. However, the goddess was very angry at Umbra's poor planning (as witnessed by the fact that the priests had to either beg for undead status or starve to death) and restricted him to this islet until such time as outsiders came and were slain to complete his transformation into a vampire. In the goddess's eyes, this restriction served two purposes: it gave the Head Priest plenty of time to contemplate his shortsightedness, and it allowed a cooling-off time for those forces that wished Imbindarla's cult destroyed, before this servant of hers got out to wreak havoc.

Eventually, the Head Priest died and rotted away, and his skeleton animated as a more powerful undead of that sort. For each round that the skeleton drains blood, it increases in power. Until the Head Priest begins draining, and for the first round of draining, the creature's statistics are as given above. After one round of draining blood, the following should be read to the players:

> The skeleton is not simply biting; it is also draining blood. The blood is not pouring down its ribs, as you might expect, but where it is going is not apparent. As it continues to drain, however, you can see that the creature is fleshing out. Tiny bits of muscle are growing on its bony frame, and membranes are forming over its ribs. Tendons sprout from its joints, and dark hair writhes from a thin layer of flesh on its skull. Something twitches in its eye sockets, but you fortunately cannot see what might be there.

At the beginning of round two of draining, this creature is AC 3, with 5 hp added to its remaining total. The skeleton continues draining blood for 1-6 hp per round, but its victim also loses one life level at the start of this round. Cold,

electricity, and nonmagical weapons now do only half damage to the skeleton, and the monster regenerates 1 hp this round. Its strength increases to 18/25.

After two rounds of draining blood, the description below should be read aloud:

> The creature's form is fleshing out as your companion's struggles grow feebler and more desperate. Fatty deposits bubble over firming muscles, and organs form and begin to pump putrid fluids. No blood vessels appear. Instead, gloss-black ropes of negative energy squirm across the muscles. The monster's nerves are duller black whips of energy lashing the bloated muscles into action. The creature's eyes expand like bladders, gray and soulless.

By the beginning of the third round of blood draining, the creature is nearly complete. Its armor class improves to 2, and 5 hp are added to its remaining total. The monster drains a final 1-6 hp worth of blood, and its victim loses one more life level at the start of this round. A +1 or better weapon is required to hit this abomination, which can regenerate 2 hp on the next round if harmed on a previous round. Its strength is now 18/50.

The creature is complete after this (the third) round of draining blood. Read the following aloud to the players:

> The creature's body is complete when pallid skin flows over the sickly underlying structures. Its hair and eyebrows finish their growth, and the creature stands 6' tall, a powerful corpse given unholy life. It throws its arms wide and howls its pleasure at being reborn, then fixes its cold gaze upon you and draws back a fist to smash you.

Vampire (Head Priest): AC 1; MV 12"/18"; HD 8+3 (add a final 5 hp to its remaining total); #AT 1; Dmg 5-10; SA drain two levels per hit; *charming gaze;* SD +1 or better weapon to hit; assume *gaseous form* at will; regenerates 3 hp per round (starting this round); half damage from cold and electricity; S 18/76; AL CE; MM1/99.

At this point, the vampire stops draining blood and releases its victim, whether the PC is alive or dead, for it can gain no more power from blood draining. However, the Head Priest now wants to try out this strong new form and uses physical attack modes in preference to its *charm* ability. It hurls armored PCs 5'-10' into the lake, where they sink in 20'-deep water and possibly drown (it needs to roll 4 over its minimum "to hit" roll to do this). It tries to beat lightly armored PCs to death, starting with magic-users or other spell-casters and saving thieves for last. The Head Priest may leave this room and the entire complex any time after round four, having fulfilled Imbindarla's conditions for its freedom.

Throughout all its forms, this creature has standard undead immunity to *paralysis, charm, poison, sleep,* and *hold* spells.

Running this encounter properly will take a complete understanding of the Head Priest's transformation and the contingencies which exist between the *Serpin Lexicon* (area 9) and the Head Priest's condition. One way to run the Head Priest is to treat him as a completely new creature each round, ignoring old statistics and carrying forward only hit points. In any event, be sure to read this section over very carefully before running this encounter.

The vampire flees if destruction is imminent, flying off and hiding until it can regenerate and return to destroy the PCs. Since the vampire has no coffin, it disappears if its body is killed. In this event, it is pulled into the *Serpin Lexicon* to re-form its body.

It is vital to note that if the Serpin Lexicon *is destroyed before the PCs fight the Head Priest, that creature cannot turn into a vampire.* It remains in skeletal form throughout the battle, the magic which sustains it destroyed. Although it still bites and drains blood, it does not become stronger. Under these circumstances, once its skeletal form is killed, it is forever destroyed.

The *Serpin Lexicon* is fully described at the end of this adventure.

Once the Head Priest is dealt with, the PCs can survey their winnings. There are four large iron chests and three urns (3' high) chained to the pole, but the chains are rusted almost to nothing and are easy to break (the pole is preserved hardwood and is still sufficiently strong enough for pieces of it to be used as stakes). The locks on the chests are similarly easy to break open. The contents of these containers are:

Chest #1: Several hundred pounds of copper coins and jewelry, worthless from verdigrise.

Chest #2: Several hundred pounds of silver coins and jewelry, very badly tarnished. For every hour that the PCs spend polishing this silver, they recover 5-20 sp worth, per person working. There is enough work here to keep one person busy for 50 hours.

Chest #3: 2,900 gp.

Chest #4: A demonic statuette made of jet, with sapphire eyes (the whole is worth 9,500 gp; each sapphire is worth 4,500 gp) and rotted wooden masks and statues with a total of 30 100-gp gems inset.

Urn #1: 1,000 gems worth 10 gp each, weighing 25 lbs. total (the urn weighs 10 lbs. more).

Urn #2: 20 pieces of jewelry worth 50-100 gp each, weighing 18 lbs. total (the urn weighs 10 lbs. more).

Urn #3: Rotten fabric twined about several magical items: three unlabeled potions (*invulnerability, healing, philter of persuasiveness);* a scroll of three spells (*cure blindness, cure serious wounds, neutralize poison);* a *vampiric regeneration ring* (*DMG,* page 130); five *arrows +2;* and a *manual of quickness of action.*

This treasure was going to launch the order of Imbindarla back into power when the priests pooled it with the resources of other survivors of the destruction of the sect. There is no one left to claim this treasure; of course, carrying it all could be a problem.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs did not destroy the Head Priest, and it gained its full powers as a vampire, the adventurers will have the sticky problem of an angry vampire hounding them until it turns them all into its servitors (lesser vampires) or is destroyed.

If the party destroyed the creature but not the *Serpin Lexicon,* the vampire will come back the following night, appearing next to the book. Even if the PCs destroy the book and the vampire, there could well be other servants of Imbindarla who will look for vengeance against the PCs.

The *Serpin Lexicon*

Perhaps the single most important action the PCs will take in the course of their adventure in the Pit is saving or destroying the *Serpin Lexicon.* While some of the book's abilities and powers are explained in the course of the adventure, it has many other uses. The following information can be used to help make the PCs curious about the work (in which case they may not want to destroy it) and to aid in building the feeling of lurking malevolence which should permeate the Pit.

The *Serpin Lexicon* is an eldrich tome dedicated to evil and the spread of chaos. It deals primarily with the conjuration and summoning of extraplanar creatures, particularly those from the lower planes, with secondary spells pertaining to death and necromancy. In addition to long sections of narrative describing Imbindarla's cult and its ceremonies (these are unpleasant but not dangerous to peruse), the book contains the following spells:

Cleric
protection from evil
detect life
animate dead
feign death
negative plane protection
speak with dead
abjure
exoricise
protection from evil, 10' radius
animate dead monsters
commune (with Imbindarla)*
dispel evil
slay living

Magic-user
protection from evil
protection from evil, 10' radius
animate dead
contact other plane
dismissal
dolor
sending
ensnarement
invisible stalker
spiritwrack
banishment
cacodemon
torment

* This spell will not function, since that deity is currently in an inactive void state for want of worshipers.

Since Imbindarla is a demigoddess, she cannot grant spells over fifth level to her clerics. All of these spells are designed to be used in specially prepared ritual rooms (like area 11 of the Pit). Using them outside this room will not prevent the spells from working, but it will prevent the user from being able to control the effects. For example, casting *cacodemon* in a hallway automatically lets the demon burst free from the spell's restraints to attack the spell-caster and anyone else in the area. A *dispel evil* spell cast outside a ritual chamber simply fails, as does any other spell which cannot otherwise go awry.

Anyone may open the book and thumb through it without penalty. If someone attempts to use a spell, however, there will be trouble. Any good-aligned spell-caster using this evil work suffers 3-18 hp damage and loses 1,000-6,000 xp immediately, with no saving throw allowed. In addition, a guardian creature is summoned (see below for descriptions of such guardian creatures). Likewise, if a PC who cannot normally use spells tries to utter any of these incantations, the spell fails and the attempt immediately summons one of the book's guardian creatures.

Only neutral and evil clerics and magic-users (not their subclasses) may use this work without harm, and the DM should monitor neutral PCs closely. Even evil PCs cannot cast spells which would normally be beyond their levels to cast; any attempt to do so summons a guardian creature. Evil spell-casters may use each spell that they understand and are of high-enough level to use, once per week, reading the spell out of the book as if it were a scroll. The spell will not vanish when the book is used in this way. Spells may not be copied out of this work; if a spell is copied, both the copy and the original spell fade away.

The *Serpin Lexicon* has many extradimensional spaces built into its pages, most of these holding guardian creatures. Whenever the book is improperly used, one of these creatures appears in 1-4 rounds to attack the reader. Possible guardian creatures include imp (1), quasit (1), dretch (1), manes (2-5), larva (2-8), lemures (1-3), and rutterkin (1). A guardian creature attacks the reader first, until that person or the guardian is dead, then it attacks the reader's compatriots. Guardians attack until destroyed. The DM can add more creatures if the PCs decide to keep the book, making the guardians minor in power but potent enough to make the PCs think twice about using the book frivolously.

The book has other powers as noted in this adventure. It provides an extradimensional space, much like a coffin, where the Head Priest's remains go if it is destroyed in combat. In this limbo the creature forms a new body, to emerge from the book in 24 hours. The emerging creature looks like a heavy mist issuing forth from the book's pages. The mist forms into the Head Priest in one melee round, at the stage of development it had when destroyed (if it was at the skeletal stage of development, the creature which issues forth from the book will be a skeleton, etc.).

The book also serves as a focal point for the magic which allows the Head Priest to transform in the first place. If the book is destroyed before the PCs battle the Head Priest, that creature is stuck as a skeleton. It will not come back if it is destroyed, and it will not turn into a vampire if it drains blood. By the same token, if the Head Priest is killed and escapes into its extradimensional coffin, destruction of the book within the next 24 hours will also permanently destroy that creature.

The book may be destroyed in any manner that will destroy a normal book. Use the Saving Throw Matrix for Magical and Non-magical Items, on page 80 in the *DMG,* for the book's saving throws; treat the *Serpin Lexicon* as a book with a +3 on its saving throws.

The *Serpin Lexicon* is a powerful item and has severe limitations because its frequent use could easily upset any campaign. It is an evil item and should be destroyed, though this is not mandatory. It is worth 1,500 xp and 15,000 gp to evil PCs or NPCs, and an equal amount of experience to any good or neutral PC who destroys it. This relatively low value for PCs who can use the book reflects the fact that the user must have a special room to properly use the spells, so the book is not as versatile as most magical tomes. Setting up such a room is expensive (10,000-40,000 gp) and time-consuming (6-9 months, during which time no adventuring is possible while the user oversees construction). Directions for setting up special rooms are given in the *Serpin Lexicon* itself. Ω

THE HUNT IN GREAT ALLINDEL

BY RICHARD W. EMERICH

While you search for treasure, others search for you.

Artwork by George Barr

Richard says that he loves mind flayers and the nebulous powers they are supposed to possess. "This gives me great latitude for the monster's creation and abilities, as well as giving the players a foe whose powers are not easily gleaned from a quick look in the Monster Manual. *I also like the idea of a magical, mystical realm much like those described by Tolkien, while at the same time making it unexpectedly difficult for outsiders to navigate. I added my favorite race, elves, for a dramatic tone to the story line." This is Richard's third appearance in DUNGEON® Adventures.*

"The Hunt in Great Allindel" is an AD&D® adventure for 5-8 good- or neutral-aligned PCs of 4th-7th level. The party should include a magic-user and at least one cleric or druid. This module can be used independently or as part of an ongoing adventure by changing the names of the places and the location of the adventure to fit a forested valley in the DM's own game world. The adventure takes place in the middle of autumn.

Adventure Background

The DM should read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> After a week of grueling days and cold nights, you have managed to cross the formidable Yurton Mountains. This range of tall, desolate peaks surrounds a large basin of thick woodlands where the climate is definitely friendlier than on the frosty mountainsides.
>
> You would not be here were it not for the directions inscribed on a worn, yellowed parchment. Found among some useless odds and ends during your last adventure, the aged vellum depicted the location of a great lord's castle near the northern edge of a relatively unexplored forest known as Great Allindel. No other maps you could find indicated any such structure existed there, and you concluded that, if a castle was indeed there, it must be forgotten and unexplored. If the cartographers hadn't even remembered it, there was a good chance that no one else knew about it either.
>
> On the back of the parchment, faint brushstrokes outline part of the cas-

tle's main floor. After a careful scrutiny of the floor plan, you noticed that a secret door had been drawn near the northeast corner of the main floor, with a staircase symbol leading below the surface. Next to this, a few lines of small, delicate runes were drawn with great care and uniformity. These runes became cause for excitement when they were deciphered to indicate that the castle's treasure room lay below the secret portal. Several lines of runes in a different hand appeared below the diagram. These read:

Pace 40 steps toe-to-heel from the corner of the stable; then eastward go along the wall nine more steps in like manner. With fingers touching rough, cold stone, stand to face the keep and speak aloud, "Open, Open, thrice times Open!"

Thus the quest in search of this treasure became your reason for the weary trek northward. If the castle exists and has indeed been left unexplored and forgotten, then perhaps many riches lie waiting to be collected from the ruins. Now, as you stand on the eastern edge of the great forest, the castle is only a few days' walk away. With the sun high overhead, offering light but little heat to the chilly slopes of the Yurtons, you head down into the autumn-red Great Allindel. The hunt is on!

The players should be given a crude copy of the Great Allindel map showing only the mountains, forest, and castle ruins, but none of the clearings, villages, or goblin caves. They should also receive a rough drawing of the castle ruins showing the keep in relation to the wall and outbuildings, with the secret door clearly marked.

The PCs begin the adventure at the position marked by the X on the map of Great Allindel. At the start of the adventure, each PC has two weeks of iron rations remaining and rides a light war horse with saddle, bridle, reins, blanket, stirrups, and saddlebags. In addition to this equipment, each PC may have purchased up to 250-gp worth of normal equipment (which does not exceed his encumbrance limit) before leaving on this trek to the mountains. This equipment may be selected before the adventure progresses any further if the DM would rather not play out the purchasing of such materials in a town setting.

For the Dungeon Master

The weathered parchment does indeed depict the location of an ancient castle fortress, now in ruins, at the northwest border of Great Allindel. There is also a treasure hoard there of good size, but it is now the property of an evil mind flayer who has made the subterranean passages of the ruined fortress his headquarters. From here, he commands a small force of goblins and hobgoblins who patrol Great Allindel.

Great Allindel was, until one week ago, the home of a tribe of wood elves who had little interaction with beings outside their woods. Their unique homelands were surrounded by tall, forbidding mountains and were far enough north to avoid the mainstream of human activity.

But the wood elves of Great Allindel, despite their isolation, did not always live in peace. A large tribe of brutal goblins lived in the dark, dank caves along the slopes of the Yurtons to the west. The elves were not overly concerned about the goblins, because the elves' defenses were sound and their magic was old and proven. The goblins were seldom organized, limiting themselves to clumsy attacks by small patrols which the elves easily repulsed. While the elves lacked the power and numbers to rout the goblins from their caves, they lived content enough within their woods.

However, the tide of fate was to turn in favor of the forces of evil. A powerful being unexpectedly came into the midst of the goblins and quickly organized them into an efficient fighting force. The goblins' new leader, whom they called "Gak-nis-gogk" (which translates roughly as "thoughts of might"), was a mind flayer who not only possessed psionic powers but also was a powerful magician. Gak-nis-gogk then drove the goblins on a well-planned and executed assault against the wood elves.

Supported by this being's magic and power, the goblins breached the long-standing defenses of the elves and destroyed them as the rulers of Great Allindel. A small group of young elves escaped the slaughter and fled northward to take refuge in the ruined castle fortress, pursued there by Gak-nis-gogk and his remaining forces. In the ruins, exhausted and weaponless, the last of the wood elves were forced to surrender. They were imprisoned in one of the subterranean caverns, fated to give up their lives to satisfy the morbid diet of Gak-nis-gogk.

But the battle had been costly for both sides. Only 55 goblin and 10 hobgoblin warriors remained alive, leaving 370 comrades dead on the battlefield among some 200 wood elves. Realizing that the goblin caves were too large to be adequately defended while still enabling Gak-nis-gogk to keep watch on his unruly subjects, the mind flayer ordered the remaining goblins and hobgoblins into the passages below the fortress, where he set up his new headquarters. At the start of the adventure, 42 young elves remain alive in the ruins, and each day their number decreases by one as Gak-nis-gogk satisfies his appetite.

As the PCs explore Great Allindel, they may encounter a number of battle sites and realize that they, too, might suffer a fate similar to those whose bodies litter the forest. There is always the possibility of encountering a goblin patrol (see Random Forest Encounters table), and once the party is spotted, the goblins will begin *their* hunt.

All the goblins and hobgoblins in this adventure have the following statistics:

Ordinary goblin: AC 6; MV 6"; HD 1–1; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL LE; MM1/47. These goblins wear scale mail and are armed as follows: morning star (30%); short bow and short sword (30%); or short sword and sling (40%).

Goblin corporal: AC 5; MV 6"; HD 1; hp 7 each; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL LE; MM1/47. Goblin corporals wear chain mail and are armed with short bows and short swords.

Hobgoblin sergeant: AC 4; MV 9"; HD 1+1; hp 9 each; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL LE; MM1/52. Hobgoblin sergeants wear banded mail and are armed with bastard swords and composite long bows.

The PCs must fulfill three major tasks in the game to get the maximum experience points available:

1. *Find the treasure:* The PCs must locate and remove the treasure from the ruined castle.

2. *Defeat the goblins and Gak-nis-gogk:* The goblins and the mind flayer must be either killed or driven off.

3. *Free the remaining elves:* The elves who remain alive must be found and set free.

Great Allindel

Great Allindel is a dense, temperate forest made up mainly of maple, oak, birch, and beech trees, with evergreens along the northern border. The forest floor is soft with a compost of mosses, dead leaves, and rotting acorns. Line of sight is limited to 60' in most areas due to the density of the trees, except in the glades and clearings indicated on the map.

While the PCs are in Great Allindel, check for random encounters every hour (six turns). If a 1 on 1d6 is rolled, an encounter occurs. Consult the Random Forest Encounters table to determine the encounter.

Path obscurement: The forest itself was the main defense of the elves, for over time their magic had fed the trees as much as had the rich soil. The trees and flora now act automatically to obscure paths and trails if used by any beings not native to Great Allindel. In addition, the trees could cast *suggestion* spells upon such travelers within the forest's boundaries to make them leave the woods. However, with the death of the majority of the elves, the trees have lost this *suggestion* ability, although the power of *path obscurement* still remains with them.

If a party of adventurers is not escorted by a wood elf or other sylvan or faerie creature, the trees treat the PCs as intruders and apply their *path obscurement* power. The trees shift their branches, underbrush moves, and grass grows over well-trodden paths. All trail-blazing marks and footprints are erased within one hour. For every 500' (about 1/10 mile) the PCs travel in the forest, there is a 50% chance that they (druids and bards included) will be misdirected. On a roll of 1-5 on 1d10, a path opens to the right or left, whichever will lead the party to the closest defensive clearing (see areas 3-7). Such a path appears to be angled only slightly away from the PCs' intended course, but this is an illusion. Normally, elven warriors manned concealed guard posts around the perimeters of the defensive clearings to deal with any undesirable creatures herded there by the magical forest.

Each goblin patrol carries a magical crystal made by their leader, Gak-nis-gogk, which defeats the magic of the trees in a 50' radius from the holder (the leader of the patrol). In this way, the goblins can move through Great Allindel without falling prey to the forest's magic. The PCs can create similar protection by:

1. Casting a *speak with plants* spell. By talking directly to the surrounding flora, a cleric or druid may be able to persuade the forest to refrain from misleading the group. The DM must determine whether to grant immunity based upon the sincerity and wording of the PCs' request.

2. Casting a *shape change* spell. Changing into an elf or other sylvan/faerie creature satisfies the requirements for being unaffected by the trees' magic. A *polymorph self* or similar spell or spell-like effect is not adequate.

3. Using an *instrument of the bards.* Any bard who plays one of these magical instruments produces the same effect as Gak-nis-gogk's magical crystals, as long as the bard continues to play. The music, however, attracts wandering monsters. Roll for an encounter every turn (10 minutes) instead of every hour.

Random Forest Encounters

1d20	Encounter
1	1-2 brown bears: AC 6; MV 12"; HD 5+5; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-8; SA hug for 2-12 hp; AL N; MM1/9.
2-4	2-7 sprites: AC 6; MV 9"/18"; HD 1; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA sleep ointment; SD become *invisible, detect good/evil* (5" range), *move silently;* AL N(G); slim swords (as per daggers), bows (as per short bow, with one-half range and effect); MM1/92. Because the sprites detest ugliness and are angry over the elves' annihilation, they often harrass the goblin patrols. If the sprites are encountered by the PCs, there is a 50% chance that they can give specific information about the goblins and the disaster which befell the elves, but only if the majority of the PCs are of good alignment. The sprites will neither aid in battle nor act as scouts.
5	1-3 ghouls (reroll this encounter during daylight hours): AC 6; MV 9"; HD 2; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep, charm* spells; AL CE; MM1/43. Because they are undead, ghouls are not bothered by the *path obscurement* power of the forest, but they find the pickings in the defensive clearings worth investigating.
6-7	2-8 pixies: AC 5; MV 6"/12"; HD 1/2; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA attack while *invisible, cause confusion* by touch, 10% cast *Otto's irresistible dance,* arrows are +4 to hit; SD become *visible/invisible, polymorph self, create illusions, know alignment, dispel magic* (at 8th-level), *dancing lights, ESP;* opponents are at –4 to hit pixies because of their small size; weapons as per sprites; AL N; MM1/79. The pixies will help the PCs 30% of the time, as per sprites.
8-10	1-3 owlbears: AC 5; MV 12"; HD 5+2; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-12; SA hug; AL N; MM1/77.
11-14	2-5 ogres: AC 5; MV 9"; HD 4+1; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL CE; spear; MM1/75. The ogres have become more prevalent in Great Allindel, no longer worrying about being hounded by elven patrols. They have descended from their colder mountain lairs to hunt in the woods, and a few have been herded into the defensive clearings by the forest's *path obscurement* power.
15-20	Goblin patrol (roll on Goblin Patrol Subtable)

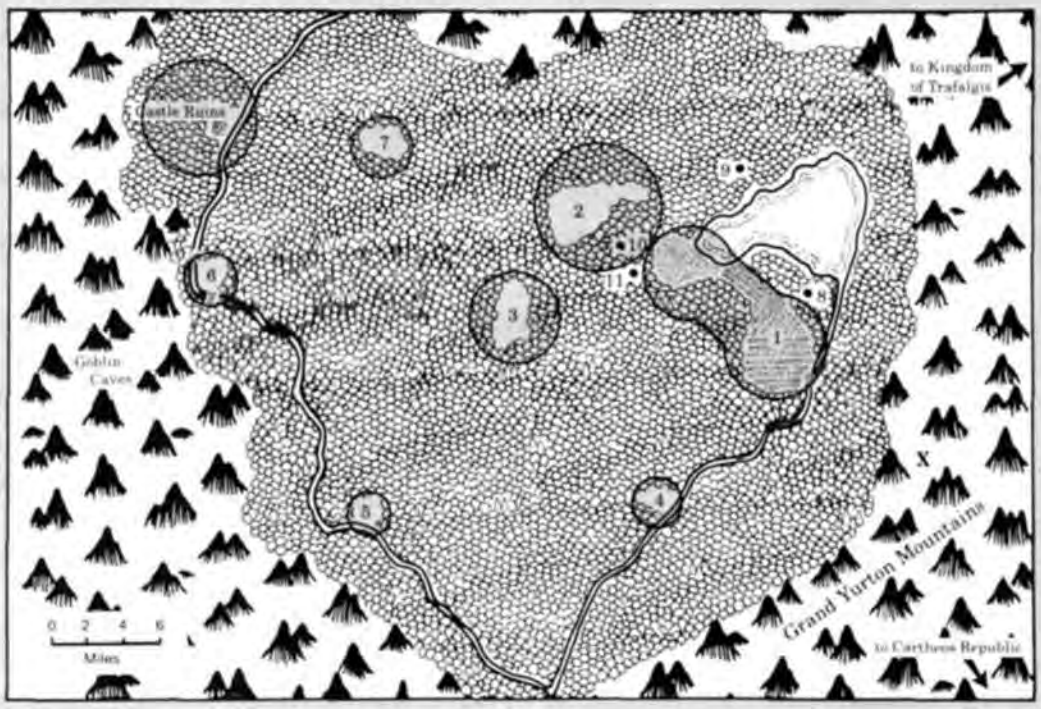
If the PCs approach any of the numbered encounter areas on the map of Great Allindel, the chance of encountering a goblin patrol is increased. Within the lines drawn around each numbered area, add 2 to the die roll before consulting the table above.

Goblin Patrol Subtable

1d6	Encounter
1	Two goblins, one goblin corporal
2	Three goblins, one goblin corporal
3	Three goblins, one hobgoblin sergeant
4	Five goblins, two goblin corporals
5	Five goblins, one hobgoblin sergeant
6	Three goblins, two goblin corporals, one hobgoblin sergeant

There is only one patrol of each type in the forest. Should a patrol be eliminated, delete it from the table and select the next entry on the table if a later die roll indicates an encounter with that deleted patrol.

GREAT ALLINDEL



4. Casting a *limited wish* or *wish* spell. Casting either of these spells and specifically asking for "immunity from the forest's magic on the group for as long as possible" (or similar wording) provides total immunity for everyone within 25' of the caster for 12 hours (*limited wish*) or 36 hours (*wish*).

5. Casting a *commune with nature* spell. A druid casting this spell can analyze the forest's magic, and the spell provides the druid and his party with total immunity from such magic for the spell's duration.

6. Obtaining one of Gak-nis-gogk's magical crystals. If a PC captures or kills a goblin patrol leader and takes his magical crystal, the protection afforded by it then applies to that PC and his allies within the crystal's radius of effect.

If the PCs have a method for flying, they may also try to send up a scout to yell directions to his friends below. Unfortunately for the party, the canopy of tree leaves is so dense that communication with those on the ground by hand signals, lights, or voice is impossible. It is possible to ascend, check the path, and descend to tell others, but because of the thick, dense boughs, travel between the ground and the heights takes 15 rounds each way, during which time the forest can *obscure* the paths again. Of course, two or more PCs possessing telepathy can communicate between the sky and the ground, but the PC who is aloft cannot see the party in order to direct it.

Encounters in Great Allindel

Unless otherwise indicated, the clearings shown on the map are covered with 4"-tall wild grass but have no underbrush or trees. The following descriptions assume daylight conditions unless otherwise stated.

1. Wheat Fields. It is difficult to judge the true size and shape of this clearing upon entering it from the surrounding forest, so the DM should be careful to describe only the immediate area around the party.

> You come upon a clearing in the forest to find tall stalks of wheat waving in a light breeze. A narrow road of hard-packed earth separates the line of tall trees from the golden, 4'-high grain. You see a narrow path leading straight into the wheat in front of you.

This clearing contains most of the cultivated wheat for the five elven villages in Great Allindel. The fields are crisscrossed with evenly spaced paths to facilitate the wheat's cultivation and harvesting. Anyone with a secondary skill in farming has a chance (35% plus 2% per point of intelligence) to notice that the wheat is overripe and should have been harvested a week ago.

The southeast tip of the clearing is bordered by a 100'-wide stretch of river. While its current is swift, the river is shallow—only 10' deep across most of its width. At the point where the river runs closest to the grain field, the elves used stones to build an 8'-wide ford across the river. At this ford, the water is only 2' deep, and an observant character has a 25% chance to notice the stonework if he examines the water here.

The northern, narrow section of the

clearing presently lays fallow in preparation for planting in late autumn. If the PCs first enter the clearing here, read the following aloud:

> As you come to the edge of the forest, you feel the hard-packed earth of a narrow dirt road beneath your feet. The road separates the trees from a tilled, bare field. An occasional stalk of wheat or weedy leaf can be seen on the loose, turned soil.

2. Grazing Clearing.

> This open area between the trees is covered with lively green grass, varying in height from 3" to 8". In some places you can see bare spots where the grass has been cropped down close to the soil.

This clearing was used as grazing land for the few horses and other herd animals kept by the elves. The animals have all been killed or driven off by the goblins, but as the party crosses the clearing, there is a 35% chance that 1-10 animal skeletons will be found, obviously stripped of their flesh quite recently.

3-7. Defensive Clearings. These natural clearings were an intrinsic part of the elves' defense against outside intrusion. The *path obscurement* magic of the trees caused all unwanted visitors to be directed into one of the clearings. Here, guard patrols would eliminate evil creatures or cast *sleep* spells on those trespassers whose intentions were generally good to enable their easy removal to the forest's outskirts. Should the PCs try to move through the forest without any protection against the trees' magic, they will soon find themselves in one of these clearings. Attempts to leave the clearing always fail, for even though the party appears to head off in a straight line, all paths lead back to the clearing once more. Even *not* following paths is useless.

Random monsters in these areas (except goblin patrols) are encountered near the center of the clearing 30% of the time or roving along the forest edge 70% of the time. Because the goblins know about the trees' magic, they patrol these areas more than the rest of the forest and are thus more likely to be encountered here than other random monsters (see Random Forest Encounters table).

Important Note: When the PCs first enter a defensive clearing, roll immediately to see if an encounter occurs. Thereafter, roll every hour as usual.

Goblins encountered in a defensive clearing remain concealed at the edge of the forest and use their missile weapons to full advantage against anyone caught without cover in the open clearing. The goblins stay in concealment and try to make the PCs attack their superior position. They will come out into the open, however, if they wound at least three of the PCs, or if the PCs cast offensive magic doing at least 25 hp damage against their position. There is a 50% chance that a goblin will flee if he is the last of his patrol left alive and is not currently in combat. Hobgoblins will not flee.

3. Center Clearing. During their battles with the elves, some goblins became separated from their platoons and, without the benefit of the magical crystal held by their leader, were diverted to this clearing by the trees. A patrol of 10 elven warriors killed 24 goblins and two hobgoblins here. Their unburied and stripped remains lie at the northern end of this clearing among broken arrows and damaged armor. If the PCs move into the northern section of the clearing, read the following aloud:

> As you walk through the high grass, you stumble over the remains of many short humanoids. Upon close examination, you can see that these are dead goblins. A few broken arrows, pieces of damaged armor, and splintered weapons lie scattered among the bodies of the dead, which have been here for about one week.

Treasure Items in Area 6 (Roll 1d4)

1. *Wand of fear.* Mistaken by the goblin scavengers as a useless bit of wood, this slender, dark-brown wand bears faint silver runes which require a *read magic* spell to decipher. The runes read: "Frighten thy enemies by the will of Enoreth." The command words for activation of the wand are "by the will of Enoreth."
2. Five *arrows +2.* Five magical arrows are left in a worn elven quiver of fine tanned leather, which has been discarded and covered over by some underbrush near the forest's edge. Only a *detect magic* spell will reveal the arrows' magical nature.
3. *Ring of protection +1.* This silver ring inset with a bright-green emerald lies covered by the remains of an elven archer. It looks like an ordinary ring, though finely crafted. Only a *detect magic* spell will reveal its magical nature. There are some finely drawn runes along the ring's inner surface that require a *read magic* spell to decipher. The runes read: "The protection of Rallathil."
4. *Eye of the eagle.* A single lens from a pair of *eyes of the eagle* is found beneath a tree, in whose branches an observation platform can be found. The pair was used by one of the elf scouts to survey the surrounding terrain in search of goblin patrols. When the attack came, the scout dropped one lens and, in the excitement, had no chance to hunt for it before retreating. (See the *Dungeon Masters Guide,* page 144, for the effects of using only one lens.)

Treasure Items in Area 7 (Roll 1d4)

1. *Necklace of missiles.* The captain of the elven patrol died before he could use the last two missiles on this necklace, which remains around his neck. The elf lies face down beneath three other dead elves. One 6-HD missile and one 2-HD missile remain on this silver necklace.
2. *Boots of elvenkind.* A young elf scout was shot by goblin arrows and fell in the tall grass near the clearing's edge. His magical boots will fit only another elf. A *detect magic* spell must be cast on these items to identify them as being more than just finely made footwear.
3. Magical potion. A discarded elven knapsack contains several empty vials and some soiled bandages. At the bottom, a single glass vial with a lead-sealed cap contains a clear green liquid. This is a potion of *healing,* which will restore 2d4+2 hp damage within 1-6 rounds after being consumed.
4. Magical bow. An elf captain's bow was left undiscovered by the goblin scavengers, who did not notice its dark ash coloring against the equally dark underbrush. It is a *long bow +1.*

If the PCs announce that they are searching in the high grass around the dead creatures, they have a one-time 25% group chance to find a dead hobgoblin's magical weapon, a *bastard sword +1*, lying hidden beneath its former owner's body.

4. Southeast Clearing. This clearing is bounded on the east by a 100'-wide river. The river is shallow, each side sloping gradually down to the 20'-deep center. The current is quite swift, and anyone attempting to swim here will find himself 200' downriver (to the south) after crossing. The clearing bears no signs of recent conflict.

5. Southwest Clearing. This clearing has a river as its southern border. This river is 70' wide, is 15' deep at its center, and has the same swift current as outlined at area 4. There are no signs of battle here.

6. Western Clearing. The river curves around the west and south borders of this clearing. Two fords across the river were built by the goblins, each crude but usable. These fords are made of large boulders placed across the entire 60' width of the river, each sticking up above the water line. The fords are barely 4' wide (just enough room for foot traffic) and have openings between several of the boulders to allow the river water to continue flowing. A dexterity check at -6 on the die roll is required to avoid falling when using these fords.

The unburied remains of many elves and goblins lie about the clearing, mostly stripped of equipment and treasure. Several areas of grass in the clearing and a few trees at the edge of the surrounding forest show signs of recent fire damage (from magical spells). The goblins staged a diversionary attack on the elven forces here to cover their main assault on the elven villages.

> After exploring the clearing carefully, you total the remains of some 40 elves and about 70 goblins. Signs of fierce combat are evident, and there are several spots where only large circular areas of charred grass, brush, and goblin bones remain.

If the PCs announce that they are making a complete search of the area, they have a one-time 35% group chance to find 1-4 of the items in the Treasure Items in Area 6 table. If they do not state specifically that they are making a complete search, the PCs have only a 10% group chance to find one item. A complete search takes two full hours (and thus includes two random encounter rolls).

7. Northern Clearing. This clearing was also a site for the clash of the two races. The decaying bodies of 90 goblins, 14 hobgoblins, and 35 elven defenders lie about, stripped of gear and equipment. Most of the fatalities lie along the northern edge of the clearing. In accordance with Gak-nis-gogk's plan, a force of goblins broke off from the main army that was attacking the villages and was sent to keep the elven patrol in this clearing occupied.

> While exploring the clearing, you find at least 100 humanoids dead among 35 elven bodies. It is evident that great magicks were used in the fight for the clearing, judging from the numerous patches of charred trees and vegetation.

If the PCs announce that they are making a complete search of the area, they have a one-time 40% group chance to find 1-2 of the items listed in the Treasure Items in Area 7 table. If the players do not specifically state that their PCs are making a complete search, they have only a 10% group chance to find one item listed.

8-11. Elven Villages. The homes in these elven villages are not styled after human dwellings. Instead, each elven family lived within several large, magically preserved ancient trees. Before the goblins' attack, each village was home to about 60 residents. Each village covers about 10,000 sq. ft. of the forest, with about 1d6+15 elf homes spaced throughout the area. It takes one hour to perform a complete search of each elf home, plus one hour per 100 sq. ft. of area around the tree homes. A quick search of an elf home takes only five minutes, but the chance of finding anything useful or important is very remote with this type of search.

The Clues and Items in the Villages table lists some of the clues, items, and treasure that might be found in and

around the elf homes. If the PCs do a complete search of an elf home, there is a 25% chance that they find one item of importance. A quick search gives the PCs a 1% chance to find one item on the list. Each item or clue may be found only once.

The following is a description of a typical elf village and home. There is a 30% chance that 1-4 elf villagers are found dead within each home.

> You come upon a copse of tall, heavily gnarled deciduous trees, the exact species of which is hard to determine. Several stand close together so that they form an archway of leafy boughs. Moving through the archway, you come into a secluded atrium formed by the thick trunks and the many long branches of the surrounding trees.
>
> You see signs of desecration, for where a small, well-tended garden once stood there is now only trampled flowers and shrubs. The thick bark of the trees could not turn aside the blades which have cruelly slashed and hacked at their lower trunks. Some of the trees near the far end of the clearing are heavily burned and scorched, leaving them covered with gray ash and black char.
>
> On further investigation, you see that several of the larger trees here have small archways carved into them. After entering through one such archway, you see that the inside of the tree is mostly hollow, but carved and cultured to protect the life functions of the tree. Here you see signs of habitation: the remnants of beautifully crafted pottery, weapons, and clothing, most of which have been smashed, broken, or ripped and left strewn about on the floor. Broken furniture adds to the general clutter.
>
> Near the rear of the tree's interior is a slender, silvery-gray rope which leads up through a narrow hole in the ceiling boards, apparently to another level.

More exact details of each dwelling's contruction are left to the DM. Any PC who attempts to climb the rope must make a strength check on 1d20 or lose his grip at the halfway point, falling 10-20' for appropriate amounts of damage. The rope is nonmagical but woven from a variety of vine which is very strong (a 1/2"-wide cord is equivalent in strength to a 2" cord of normal hemp rope).

When the PCs reach the second floor, read the following to the players:

> This level, like the one below, has obviously been ransacked. You see the remains of several sleeping pallets and other personal gear strewn about. The interior of the tree is scorched and slashed randomly. The tree here has grown to provide small, narrow windows spaced unevenly around its perimeter at about chest level. A small, 3'-diameter hatch of wood with a simple handle is set into the inside of the tree at about waist level. The hatch fits perfectly with the body of the tree, even matching in grain and texture.

This hatch was used by the elves to move easily out into the branches of their home trees. The hatch swings on flexible hinges made from a type of living vine which grows from the tree. The hatch, because of this link, is still living wood.

If the PCs open the hatch and look out, describe the following:

> Opening the hatch reveals a thick branch whose top side is devoid of leaves and twigs, a platform of sorts about 2' wide. Coiled and stored on pegs set into the trunk of the tree are three rolls of the same silvery-gray rope as the one leading to the second floor within the tree. Looking out from the hatch, you can see over the treetops and pick out the tall, dark-gray peaks of the Yurton Mountains in the hazy distance. Closer, you see the comings and goings of many small, colorful birds. All around you the trees show leaves in autumn colors, fanned into constant motion by a cool, comfortable breeze.

Each of the four elven villages had its own responsibilities to the larger community, as described below. The DM may wish to make up other encounters and descriptions based on this information.

8. Lower Village. This village was responsible for the planting, tending, and harvesting of the elves' crops grown in area 1. Several large trees at the edge of the village have been specially modified to hold the harvested grain within their hollow interiors. Currently, these storage trees are empty, as the remains of last year's grain was burned by the goblins at the direction of Gak-nis-gogk. Carts and small wagons have been left overturned and burned in several locations near the clearing's northern edge.

9. Upper Village. This village was responsible for supplementing the elves' diet with fish from the lake. Five small fishing boats lie undamaged along the shore directly south of the village. Each boat can hold three elves or humans and their fishing gear. Fishing nets are strung out to dry along the lakefront.

10. West Village. The people of this village were responsible for the care and tending of the few domesticated beasts in the community. Open-air stalls and pens are set up in the woods between the edge of the clearing (area 2) and the village.

11. South Village. This village housed the elven warriors when they were not on duty. A school for the training of warriors and those interested in the arcane arts was also located here. A small library of arcane knowledge once occupied a large tree near the center of the village. The library was personally searched by Gak-nis-gogk, who appropriated several magic-user scrolls from it (see chest 1 in area 23). Then the mind flayer burned the library tree to the ground, leaving only a charred trunk and scattered branches.

The Ruins

These ruins are the current residence of the mind flayer Gak-nis-gogk and those of his remaining goblin forces not assigned to patrol duty in Great Allindel. Read the following to the players when their PCs cross the river and approach the ruins.

During daylight hours:

> Having crossed the river and moved northwest, you find the remains of a tall, gray granite wall standing across your path. Toppled buildings of the same type and color of stone are visible behind the weathered, moss-covered barrier. Larger heaps of weather-smoothed stone stand at the corners of the walls, tall towers which have tumbled down over decades.

During dusk and night hours:

> You cross the river, and in the dim starlight you see the outline of a great ruin, no more than a wide area of darker shadow among the lighter gray tones of the surrounding trees and underbrush. A clear area about 100' wide separates the night-veiled ruins from your position among the flora by the river's edge.

Refer to the Castle Ruins map when the PCs advance into the area around and within the ruins. There are several huge breaks in the fallen castle wall through which the PCs may enter the courtyard. Once inside, the adventurers can explore the fallen buildings. After comparing what they see with the crude map in their possession, they should be able to find the general area of the secret door to the treasure room.

Unfortunately, when the words written on the parchment are spoken and the secret door swings open, the PCs are confronted with a wall of fallen stone that completely blocks the passage. A few hours of digging should convince them that nothing short of an army of workers or a *wish* spell will clear the way fast enough to prevent the goblin patrols from discovering them.

The PCs will have to find another way into the passages below the castle. There is such an entrance (see area 2), but it leads directly into the subterranean passages of the goblins and Gak-nis-gogk, who will not take the PCs' intrusion politely.

1. Goblin Guard Posts. At all times, a guard party of two goblins sits in each of these foxholes centered in the north and south walls. In addition, two ordinary goblins are always posted in the antechamber to the subterranean passages (see area 2). All goblins at these guard posts are armed with short bows and four quivers of arrows (80 arrows). They can fire two arrows per round.

Should any unidentified creatures approach the wall, one of the goblins on duty quietly alerts the other wall post and the goblins in the antechamber before returning to his post. During the hours of darkness, the goblins wait quietly in hiding until those approaching get within 60' of the wall. At this point, the goblins expect the newcomers to give a password. If those who approach fail to give the password on their own initiative, the goblins immediately open fire.

Each goblin archer has four "light arrows," one of which will be used first to illuminate the area around the targets. These arrows have *continual light* spells cast upon them by Gak-nis-gogk and are

Clues and Items in the Villages (Roll 1d100)

01-05 A simple necklace of silver chain (worth about 20 gp) is looped around a projection on the tree's inner wall.

06-10 A quiver of 1-12 elven arrows has rolled under a bed. While these arrows are not magical, they are finely crafted and can fly 20' farther than the maximum for each range.

11-15 A finely made elven dagger lies among debris on the floor. There is a 20% chance that this is a *magical elven dagger* (see end of adventure). Otherwise, it is a well-made weapon whose blade is of fine steel.

16-20 A small brown leather pouch tied together with a blue ribbon is concealed within a dead elf's robes. Inside are four cakes of a light-yellow powder which smells of fragrant flowers. It is a bag of *dust of blending* (see end of module).

21-25 Several pieces of parchment are scattered about the floor. Twenty percent are notes or practice pages for drawing magical runes (a *read magic* spell is required to determine that the runes are magical). Seventy-five percent are poems about life in the forest. Five percent are magical scrolls of first, second, or third level (DM's choice).

26-30 A beautiful silk robe of the deepest green has miraculously escaped harm by the raiders. This ceremonial robe provides a +1 bonus to saves vs. spells if worn by an elf who worships Rallathil regularly.

31-35 A small book bound in dark magenta leather with silver foil engravings lies beneath the ruins of a wooden desk. This is the diary of an elf female (written in elvish, of course), recounting her life of music, poetry, and peace. The last entry, hastily scribbled, reads: "The goblins come! They are ceaseless hunters, wishing the end to all that lives under the boughs of Great Allindel. . ."

36-40 Two young elf boys lie dead, one with a broken, rusty scimitar protruding from his chest. The blade has a serrated edge, and any elf, ranger, or other character who has fought mountain goblins will realize who used this sword on the boy.

41-45 The corpse of a young elf male has been pinned against the wall by several black-feathered arrows. There are runes carved in the wooden floor, and a small knife lies in the dead elf's hand. If the PCs can read elvish, they recognize the symbols for "mortal danger," "goblins," and "thoughts."

46-50 A gold cloak broach (worth 75 gp) lies among the debris. It is a finely worked piece of jewelry made to resemble a running deer, with a tiny ruby for its eye.

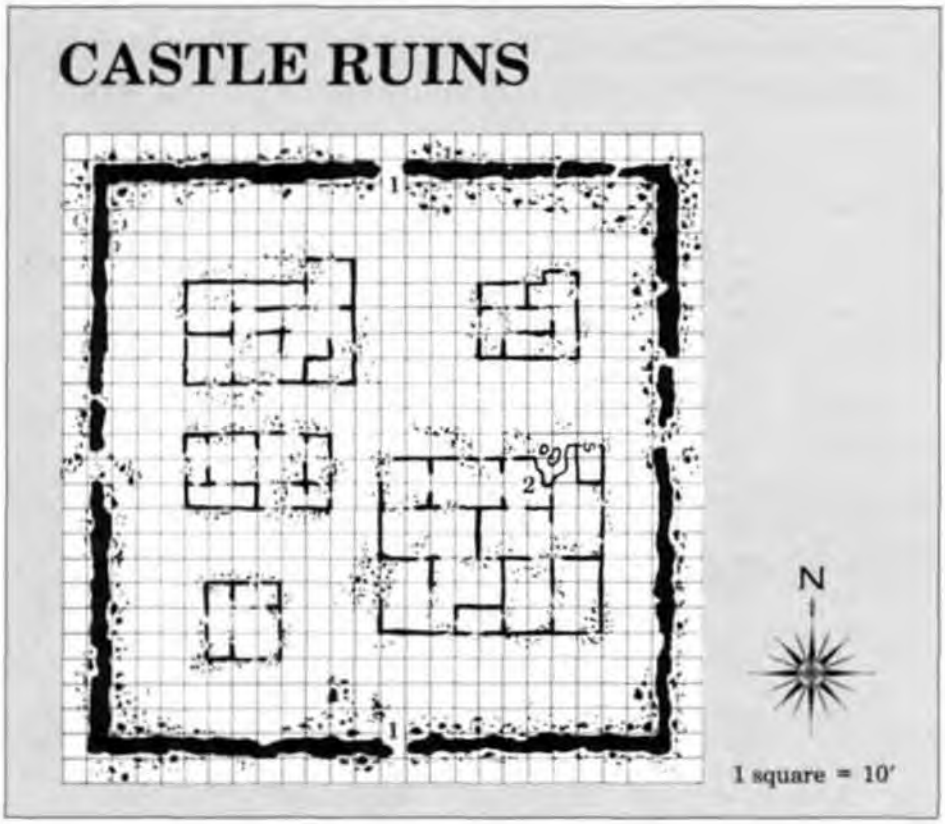
51-65 A broken spear and a buckler have been discarded in a corner. Both are obviously of goblin make.

66-68 The body of a slim elf female is partly covered by the splintered remains of an elegant hardwood table. On close inspection, the PCs can see that her hands clutch a small, smooth stone. Mostly ivory colored with streaks of crimson and gold, it is roughly egg shaped. The elf was attempting to use this *stone of controlling earth elementals* when she was killed by a club stroke to the head (see below).

69-90 A dead goblin lies among the debris, his death most certainly brought about by the four green-feathered arrows protruding from his back. His weapons, a short sword and sling, lie beside him. The sword's serrated edge is notched.

91-00 The interior of this tree is heavily burned and charred. What material goods may have been here lie near the center of the room, now a pile of ashes and blackened debris. A broken morning star lies by the door, discarded along with an empty quiver. On close inspection, both show the crude workmanship and simple runes of goblins.

Only one of each item on this table may be found. If an item is found again, reroll for another available choice. The PCs must be able to read elvish or understand elvish symbols in order to read the messages, or they must cast the appropriate spells to do so. Items which are magical require that a *detect magic* or similar spell be cast to identify them as magical. Only elves may use the *stone of controlling earth elementals.*



kept in their quivers until needed. Once the targets are illuminated, the goblins fire their war arrows, using the remaining "light arrows" as needed to keep their targets illuminated. In this way, the goblins can fire at intruders even beyond the range of their infravision. Each *continual light* arrow illuminates a 30'-diameter sphere.

During daylight hours, the goblins can identify friends and foes at 100'. If a foe is seen, the goblins open fire at 60' range.

2. Antechamber to the Passages. The entrance to the passages below the ruins is found in the remains of the main house near the northeast corner of the collapsed building. An antechamber has been excavated here, giving the two goblin corporals here an excellent defensive position in case of attack. A wall of timbers, earth, and stone has been erected and faces the entrance. The goblins can fire their short bows from maximum cover (90%, –10 to armor class vs. missiles) at intruders.

Should an attack against their position occur, one goblin immediately rings a bronze bell fastened to one of the timbers, while the other fires his bow. The goblins sound the alarm and attack only when the closest trespasser is within 20' of the wall. This alarm warns those below to send help, and will probably ruin the PCs' chances of moving through the passages quickly.

As the PCs stand immediately outside the entrance to the underground passages, read the following aloud:

> The northeast corner of this building is in much better shape than the rest of the structure. Here, a side doorway has been enlarged and supported by timbers and large stones, forming a crude, square archway. It is obvious that someone or something built this recently; the stones and timbers could not have fallen in such an organized, unnatural way.

If the timbers used to support the roof in the entrance corridor are destroyed or knocked out (by at least two PCs exerting a minimum of 30 points of strength) the ceiling area within 10' collapses on those below, causing 6d6 hp damage and partly burying the PCs under hundreds of pounds of rock and wood. A save vs. spells indicates that an individual PC has not been buried and takes only 3d6 hp damage from flying debris. The entire passage is blocked by such a collapse, and it will take 1d6+6 hours of work to clear.

When the PCs enter through the archway, read the following:

> Beyond the archway you see a passage made of piled stones, rocks, and mortar, whose ceiling is shored with timbers. The passage appears to lead 45' into the ruins. You can see the wall at the end of the passage is made of rocks piled below several horizontal tree trunks and timbers. There is no light source within the passage.

If the goblins sound the alarm, consult the Reinforcements table to determine the number and type of reinforcements, and how long it takes them to arrive. Reinforcements are drawn directly from the forces available in the dungeons. Groups arrive in area 3 first, then proceed on to area 2, where most combat is assumed to take place.

The Subterranean Passages

The passages and corridors between the rooms are not lit. Numbered areas are not lit, and doors are locked unless otherwise indicated. Once the PCs are underground, roll for random encounters every 15 rounds and consult the table below if an encounter is indicated. Additional encounters should be rolled each time the PCs make excessive noise, such as shouting, engaging in combat, or using explosive magicks.

1d6	Encounter
1	Two hobgoblin lieutenants (see area 11)
2	Two goblins
3	Four goblins
4	One hobgoblin sergeant with 3-6 goblins
5	Two hobgoblin sergeants
6	Gak-nis-gogk accompanied by the hobgoblin captain and four goblins (see area 15 and end of adventure for statistics)

3. Lower Entry Room. This area is dimly lit by three torches. One goblin guard is posted here at all times, its duty to respond to any calls for aid from the outposts above and prevent goblins from exiting without proper authority. If the bell in the guard alcove in area 2 rings,

this guard sounds a large brass gong in response. The gong can be heard throughout the entire complex, eliminating any hope for the PCs to surprise their foes.

4. Soldiers' Cave. Small fires in the center of this cave barely illuminate the walls. The goblin warriors who are not assigned duties live here. They can assemble and regroup in area 3 within two rounds after hearing the alarm gong from area 3. There are 12 goblins, two goblin corporals, and two hobgoblin sergeants here at all times.

The goblins carry all of their treasure with them. Each goblin has 2-16 sp and 2-20 cp. The hobgoblin sergeants carry 2-8 gp, 3-18 sp, and 1-3 gems (worth 20 gp each).

5-7. Goblin Family Caves. These three caves are lit by small fires near their centers and torches around their perimeters. A total of 32 adult female goblins and 24 young live in these caves. If they hear an alarm bell or encounter trespassers, the females immediately scoop up their belongings and herd their young into area 8, for protection by the guards in area 9A. If the PCs attack, one female leads the children to safety while the others stand and fight to give their young time to escape. The **young goblins** (AC 10; MV 6"; hp 1 each) will not fight. The female goblins fight as zero-level fighters and have the following statistics:

Female goblin: AC 9; MV 12"; HD 1/2; hp 1-4; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL LE; MM1/47; dagger.

The treasure listed for each of these caves can be found in its entirety only if the PCs make a complete search of the area and the creatures' belongings. A quick search yields only 20% of the treasure listed in each area.

5. North Goblin Cave. Ten females and six young live here. Among their possessions are 4 gp, 47 sp, and 83 gp.

6. Central Goblin Cave. Twelve females and 10 young live here. They own a total of 10 gp, 38 ep, 32 cp, and a beautiful cut gemstone in a dirty leather pouch. The gemstone is pale lavender in color, smooth and roughly egg shaped, about 1" in diameter at its middle. One of the youngsters found it in some rubble and kept it because of its obvious worth. The gemstone is actually an *ioun stone* capable of absorbing spells up to fourth level. It can absorb 32 more spell levels.

If the PCs find the stone, they can determine its magical nature only by casting a *detect magic* spell. Should someone try to launch the stone into flight around his head, he is automatically successful, but this gives him no further information about the stone's capabilities. Only an *identify* spell can impart this information.

7. East Goblin Cave. Ten adult females and eight young live here. Among their personal belongings are 12 gp, 43 sp, 32 cp.

8. Smithy and Workshop. This area is lit by torches. Although goblins are not known for their beautiful metalwork, they can fashion weapons and armor. There are two crude furnaces at the center of the room, directly below a natural crack in the ceiling which allows the smoke and fumes to escape (albeit much more slowly than a chimney). The outlet on the surface is concealed by a pile of rubble at the center of the ruined main building. Several crudely built work benches are set along the northeast wall, with two barrels of dirty brown water for cooling hot metals. Many simply made but effective tools lie scattered about these benches.

There are two goblin workers here repairing armor, fashioning weapons, etc. Should an alarm sound, they stop their work and report immediately to area 3.

9. Prisoners' Cavern. This chamber is lit by a *continual light* spell cast on the 10' high ceiling. At the start of the adventure, 42 young elves are imprisoned here. Each day, their goblin guards (in area 9A) choose one at random and escort him into the chambers of the mind flayer (area 21), who dines on the poor elf's brain (the body is given to the hungry goblins). The elves number as follows:

Magic-users: Four 1st-level, one 2nd-level
Fighters: Eight 1st-level, one 2nd-level
Clerics: Two 1st-level
No class (1+1 HD, as per MM1/39): 26

Statistics for these elves may be assumed to be: AC 10; MV 12"; HD as appropriate; hp average (2 hp/level for magic-users, 4 hp/level for clerics, 5 hp/level for fighters, and 5 hp for elves with no character class); #AT 1 (but unarmed); personal statistics unremarkable; AL CG; MM1/39-40 and all notes as appropriate from the *Players Handbook* and *Unearthed Arcana*).

The elves have only their tattered clothing as possessions. All are in good health, though slightly undernourished. If the PCs can free them, the elves will fight by their side if weapons and armor are found for them. The elf magic-users have no spells memorized, but the two clerics are still able to pray for spells. Yet, without spell components and the proper prayer facilities, they have been able to receive only *cure light wounds*, which they have used often over the past days to heal their compatriots, and *create water* and *purify food and drink*, which they have used to make their goblin-supplied rations palatable.

The elves are kept within this cavern by a strong iron grate which has been built into the space between two piles of stones. The piles reach to the ceiling and are mortared to hold fast. The grate has a lock plate; the key to open it is in the possession of the corporal in area 9A.

9A. Guard Chamber. This area is lit by torches. Two goblins and one hobgoblin sergeant are stationed here to guard the elf prisoners. The hobgoblin has the key to the grate at area 9. He carries a *long sword +1, flame tongue* in addition to the normal equipment listed for a hobgoblin sergeant. A handheld brass bell hangs from a hook set into the wall by the entrance to this chamber. The sergeant will use this bell to sound an alarm at the slightest disturbance, but these guards remain at their post even if they hear an alarm sounded elsewhere. They have orders not to leave this post and to defend it to the death.

10. Old Entryway. This room was once the main entry to the basement level from the main floor of the castle. The 10'-wide staircase is blocked about 30' up by a rockslide.

> You see a large room with a 10'-wide staircase running along its north wall. The staircase, made of a pale, rose-colored marble, is weathered and cracked in many places. A rockslide has blocked its upper section, sealing off this room from the area above. Another pile of rubble sits at the base of the southeast wall, but these rocks look like they were piled there by hand. Along the southwest wall you

see two large stacks of firewood piled about 8' high. The two stacks leave just enough room to gain access to a door in the southwest corner of the room.

11. Guard Room. When the castle was intact and occupied, this room housed 10 of the household guards, who were responsible for patrolling the lower level. This area is now used by Gak-nis-gogk's two lieutenant hobgoblins, Gograk and Krugak.

Gograk: AC 3; MV 9"; HD 3; hp 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/10; AL LE; MM1/52; *chain mail +1*, shield, morning star.

Krugak: AC 3; MV 6"; HD 3; hp 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17; AL LE; MM1/52; splinted mail, *flail +1*, *ring of protection +1*.

The lieutenants are here 50% of the time. They patrol the passages 30% of the time, and are with Gak-nis-gogk (in area 22) 20% of the time. If any alarm sounds, they immediately rush to area 3.

12. Storage Room. The door to this room is *wizard locked* (at the 7th level) in addition to being normally locked. The captured elves' equipment and weapons have been dumped here at Gak-nis-gogk's direction. Although the goblins were loathe to bring the "vile" stuff here, Gak-nis-gogk knows the value of elven weapons and covets their design. Should the elves in area 9 be set free, they could amply outfit themselves from this stock, taking 10 minutes to do so. The following is a brief accounting of what is here, piled randomly about the room:

39 long swords
24 long bows (without bowstrings)
38 daggers
42 spears
12 suits of elven chain mail
41 suits of elven leather armor
23 small shields
42 leather quivers
245 arrows
14 slings
26 short swords
25 short bows (without bowstrings)

Unbeknownst to the goblins, 12 of the arrows are magical *arrows +2*. The only way to find these magical arrows is by casting a *detect magic* spell. If this is not done, there is a 5% chance that each arrow a PC takes is a magical one.

13. Inside Outhouse.

The commode in the far corner is cracked and yellowed. Once made of pearly white porcelain, it is now an ugly amber color. A small table, rotten and worm-eaten, sits to the right of the door.

A 1'-diameter lead pipe leads down from the commode to a simple stone box beneath the floor. Waste accumulates here and spills over into another pipe which carries it underground to the nearby river.

14. Storage Room. The hobgoblins use this room to store torches and flints. There are 20 bundles of five torches and two small open baskets filled with odd-shaped flints.

15. Hobgoblin Captain's Room. Gak-nis-gogk's fell captain, a hobgoblin shaman who enjoys serving his perverse mind flayer lord, resides here. Xargok's room is adorned with booty from the elven villages. He is here 70% of the time and in area 22 only 30% of the time.

Xargok (7th-level shaman): AC 2; MV 9"; attacks as 4-HD monster; hp 25 (1d8+1+6d4); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 17; AL LE; MM1/52; *bracers of defense AC 5, morning star +1;* spells: *cause light wounds, cure light wounds, detect good, augury, chant, resist fire, cause blindness, dispel magic, poison.*

In combat, Xargok will put as many of his goblins between himself and his enemies as possible. This allows him time to cast his *resist fire* spell on himself before preparing to do magical combat. If he is in his room when an alert is sounded, he'll take his spears to combat (though a shaman, he can use any weapons that hobgoblin warriors can use).

Read the following to the players if their PCs gain entry to this room:

The large room before you is dimly lit by a few torches in old, rusted holders along the walls. At the center of the room lies a pile of treasure: silver goblets and silver-etched plates, coins, small open coffers of jewelry, and piles of soft clothing in shades of forest colors. Four spears stand point up against the wall by the north door, with three battle-worn shields beside them. The room's walls are smooth gray stone, overgrown in places by lichen and moss. The room smells musty and smoky.

The hobgoblin captain has amassed three coffers of 100 different pieces of jewelry (total value 4,500 gp) and has loose coins totalling 158 gp, 445 sp, and 84 cp. There are also 28 pieces of matched dinnerware worth a total of 840 gp. The clothing, snatched hurriedly from the elves' homes, is generally worthless except for three items which the captain doesn't realize are magical. Two are *cloaks of elvenkind* — dirty, gray-green cloaks of fine material. The other item is a *cloak of protection +2*. These cloaks are covered with dirt and blood and lie among 60 other garments or pieces of garments. A search without casting a *detect magic* spell gives the PCs only a 10% chance of noticing one of

Reinforcements

Round After Alarm	Encounter
2	Into area 2: one goblin (from area 3) Into area 3: 12 goblins, two goblin corporals, two hobgoblin sergeants
3	Into area 2: 12 goblins, two goblin corporals, two hobgoblin sergeants Into area 3: two hobgoblin lieutenants, two goblins
4	Into area 2: two hobgoblin lieutenants, two goblins Into area 3: three hobgoblin sergeants, hobgoblin captain, four goblins
5	Into area 2: three hobgoblin sergeants, hobgoblin captain, two goblins (two stay behind to hold area 3.)
6	Into area 3: six goblins
7	Into area 2: six goblins

Statistics for all combatants are on page 17, except for the hobgoblin lieutenants (see area 11) and captain (area 15). If reinforcements cannot find room to get into area 2, they wait for an opportunity to do so on the staircase and in area 3. They try to stay spread out to avoid area-effect spells, at the hobgoblins' direction. After round 5, two goblins are posted in area 3 as a rear guard.

these magical cloaks during a complete search. The cloaks cannot be found by a quick search.

16. Piles of Rocks.

> Only part of this room is visible, as most of the area has been filled by a rockslide. Only a narrow corridor through the area is left uncovered.

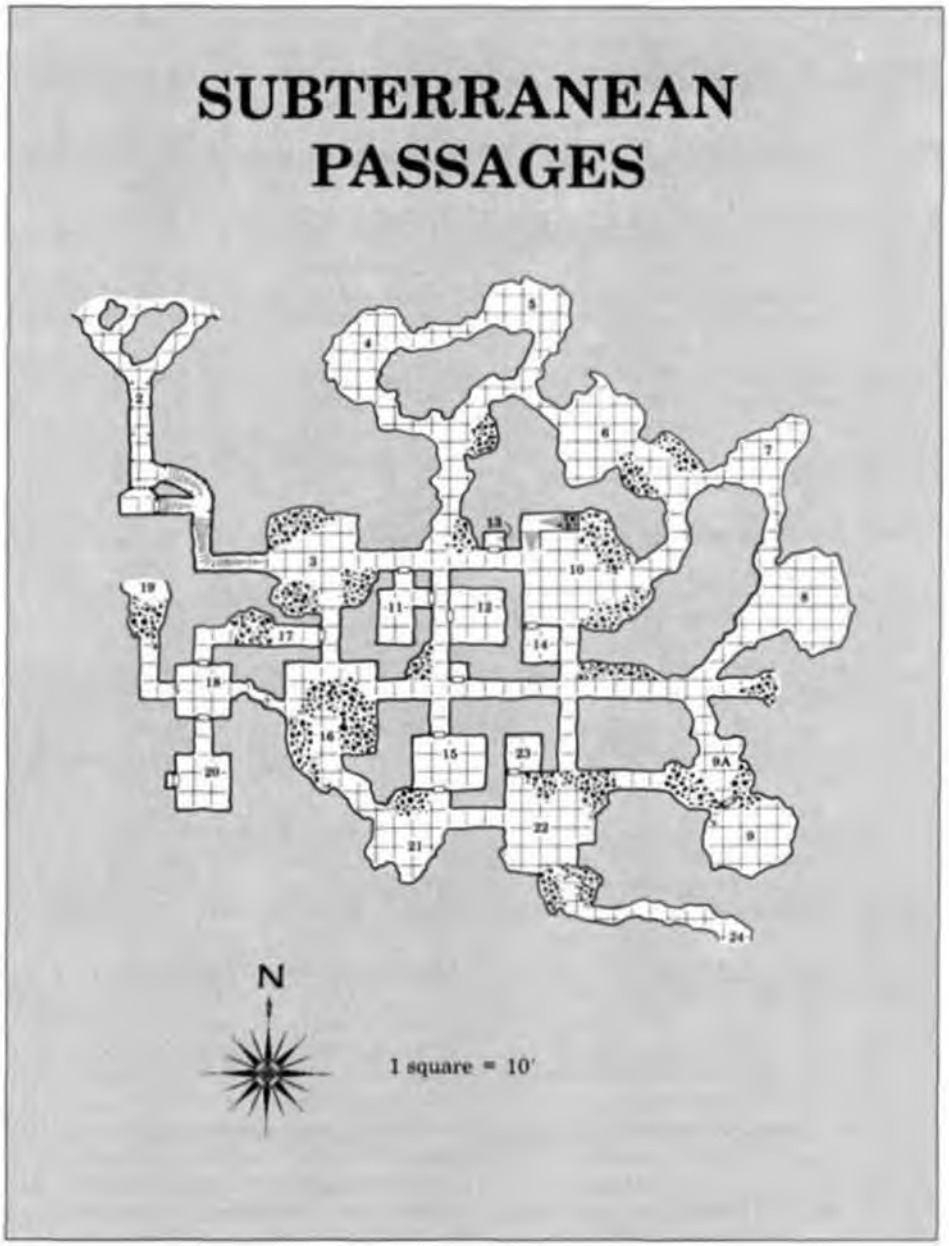
Gak-nis-gogk has cast an *illusion* (see description at the end of this module), indicated by the dotted line, over an open space between two rock piles. The *illusion* makes the rock walls appear to continue unbroken, presenting a barrier to those who believe the wall is there. If a PC wishes to disbelieve the illusion, some clue must be gleaned before an attempt to disbelieve is made (seeing Gak-nis-gogk walk through the wall without casting any spells, seeing smoke from a fire drift through the illusory wall, etc.).

17. Cave-in Corridor. In the castle's prime, this corridor led to the treasury, but now it is blocked by a cave-in and leads nowhere. The door to the corridor was locked and *wizard locked* (at 11th level) by the castle's former magician.

18. Treasury Guard Room. When the castle was thriving, two household guards were posted here to guard the lord's treasure. A secret portal known only to the lord and his family led from this room to the surface, allowing quick escape with the treasure should circumstances warrant this.

Finding that he could not easily dispel the *wizard lock* spell on the door to area 17, Gak-nis-gogk had his elf slaves dig through the stone to gain access to the room beyond. At the end of the narrow, 5'-diameter tunnel from area 16, the edges of an iron plate imbedded in the stone show that precautions were taken to prevent easy access via *passwall* spells and other means of breaching the walls.

> Near the end of the narrow corridor, you see that a quarter-inch of iron plate was imbedded in the granite wall and was apparently cut through to complete the tunnel to this room. Wooden, iron-bound doors stand in the center of the north and south walls of this 30'×30' room. Each door has a worn brass lock plate set below a brass doorknob.



19. Cave-in. A rockslide has completely blocked the secret staircase here. It would require about 10,000 man-hours of work to excavate it completely and safely. A total of seven *passwall* spells would enable the PCs to make a sloping ramp to the surface from here.

20. Treasury. This room has already been ransacked by Gak-nis-gogk, who has removed the treasure to area 23. The door to this room from area 18 was *fire trapped*, but Gak-nis-gogk successfully dispelled the trap to gain entry.

> The stone-walled room before you has wooden shelving around its perimeter and a few dusty, moth-eaten burlap sacks lying on the ground beside an old chest splintered into many pieces in the northeast corner. A single door is set into the middle of the west wall and is open wide.

A glittering in one corner catches your eye, and you find seven silver pieces and three coppers lying scattered beneath the sacks. (Some treasure!)

If the PCs look beyond the open door in the west wall, read the following:

Beyond the door is a small alcove, 8' tall, 4' wide, and 3' deep, lined with six shelves of iron, all empty. The door to this alcove is made of hardwood plated with iron and has four hasps on its outside. From the construction of the door, it is obvious that it was designed to protect items of great value, but there is nothing here now.

21-22. Gak-nis-gogk's Chambers. The mind flayer leader has made these two chambers his home. No goblin is allowed past the hobgoblin captain at area 15 without Gak-nis-gogk's permission, so that area 21 is reserved for the mind flayer's dealings with his officers — and for eating. Area 11 is for private meditation, spell casting, and other evil duties.

Area 22, like area 16, has *illusions* cast over the open sections between the rock piles, masking them to look like unbroken piles of stones and debris. These passages allow the mind flayer freedom to move about the underground area and, should the need arise, to have several secret escape routes.

21. Dining Room.

A pile of stones and debris against the northwest wall of this roughly circular cavern almost blocks a door leading north. A 10'-wide, 8'-high passage made of smooth granite cuts east from this cavern, while another passage, rough hewn but of the same dimensions, heads northwest.

There are several comfortable cushions lying on the floor along the south side of a low hardwood table placed in the middle of this cavern. On the table are several small silver-plated bowls and two daggers, their handles encrusted with many small jewels. A pair of iron manacles lying in a pool of blood are fastened to the rough stone floor on the north side of the table.

The silver bowls are used by the mind flayer to catch the blood and brains of his victims, and the daggers are for these sacrificial purposes. The manacles hold the mind flayer's intended victims firmly until dinner. The bowls are worth a total of 350 gp, and the two daggers are worth a total of 120 gp.

22. Meditation Chamber.

A single door is set into the north wall of this chamber near the northwest corner. Piles of rock, rubble, and debris have been placed against the southeast and northeast walls of the room. Near the center of the floor are more cushions, two low hardwood tables, and a small stone fire pit in which only ashes are piled. Several small statues sit on another low table set against the west wall just to the south of the passage heading west.

The statues, five of them, depict several of the evil gods whom Gak-nis-gogk worships. Each is plated in gold, making them worth a total of 500 gp if the gold is stripped away.

The mind flayer has stored his three spell books under the ashes of the fire pit. They are kept in a flat metal box and are wrapped in pigskin to protect them from the ash. See the information on Gak-nis-gogk at the end of this adventure for a description of the books' contents.

23. Treasure Hoard. The combined plunder from the castle's treasury and the elven villages lies here, protected by the mind flayer's magic. If Gak-nis-gogk determines that his forces are being beaten, he tries to escape with at least chests 1 and 2 via the tunnel at area 24.

The door to this room is locked with a normal lock and is also *wizard locked* (at the 7th level) by the mind flayer. If the PCs gain entry through a *knock* or *dispel magic* spell, read the following to the players. Be sure to amend the number of chests here if Gak-nis-gogk takes some in flight.

When you finally open the door, you see a small, 20'×20' room with an 8'-high ceiling. Four chests lie near the north wall, and sacks of coins, dinnerware, and wooden boxes of jewelry are stacked against the east wall. Each of the chests is locked with a hasp and padlock. The chests are of various sizes and made of various woods strengthened with iron bands.

The breakdown of the loose treasure is as follows:

Jewelry: 18 pieces (total value 5,500 gp)
Dinnerware: 280 lbs. (total value 1,200 gp)
Coins: 2,032 sp, 3,509 cp, 520 ep, 351 gp

Only Gak-nis-gogk has the ring of keys to open the chests, but a thief's standard *open locks* percentages apply. The chests hold the following:

Chest 1 (1'×1'×1'): 100 gems worth 25 gp each; potions of *extra-healing, haste, fire resistance, ghoul control,* and *sweet water;* scrolls of *fire trap, stinking cloud, read magic, comprehend languages, invisibility,* and *protection from normal missiles, 10' radius.*

Chest 2 (2'×1'×1'): 150 gp; 50 gems worth 45 gp each; potions of *extra healing, ESP,* and *levitation; wand of illumination* (10 charges); *gem of seeing;* wands of *magic detection* (56 charges) and *flame extinguishing* (26 charges).

Chest 3 (3'×3'×2'): human-sized suit of *chain mail +1; amulet of proof against detection and location; dagger +2;* six *arrows +1.*

Chest 4 (4'×3'×4'): 160 gp; three gold-plated goblets worth 35 gp each; two crystal bowls wrapped in cloth, worth 150 gp each; *bag of holding,* folded neatly (20-lb. weight limit); potion of *healing; chime of opening* (30 charges).

The magical items can be picked out only if a *detect magic* spell is cast on them. However, this spell does not impart any knowledge of an item's abilities, and the DM should reveal nothing about an item until an *identify* spell is cast on it. Much of this treasure belonged to the elves, and any surviving elves who find it will certainly want to recover it, even from their rescuers.

24. Escape Tunnel. The entrance to this tunnel is concealed by the *illusion* of a rock pile, which blends in with the real piles of rock and debris to either side of it. Should Gak-nis-gogk find himself in danger, he tries to flee through this passage with what treasure he can take from area 23. The tunnel heads 150'

east, then turns south and slopes upward to the surface, opening in thick underbrush beyond the ruins.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the PCs have defeated Gak-nis-gogk and his underlings, freed the remaining elves, and taken the available treasure, the adventure is over. They may wish to help the elves who are still alive rebuild their homes, spending an additional three weeks in Great Allindel to do so. If the PCs do this, the elves name them elf-friends ("nihadirin" in the elf tongue) and give each PC a fine cloak and mithral-silver broach of elven manufacture. These items immediately tell other elves, be they wood, high, valley, or gray, that these people have done the elf race a great service and should be treated with honor. In addition, these items give the PCs free passage through Great Allindel; the forest's magic will not work against wearers of these items, but both the cloak and the broach must be worn together for this function to operate.

Should the recipient of these gifts die, the cloak and broach crumble to dust. Likewise, only the original recipient can wear these devices; on others, the cloak and broach turn to dust after 60 minutes.

Group Experience

The following suggested awards are added together and presented to the group as a whole, to be divided evenly between all members of the party (even those that did not survive, though their awards will be wasted).

Action	XP Award
Each numbered area explored	50
Each elf captive freed	50
More than 75% of the goblins killed	2,000
Treasure collected (award group points only)	gp value

Personal Experience

The following suggested awards are given as appropriate to the individual PCs who helped in such actions (these awards are made only to surviving group members).

Action	XP Award
Goblin young killed	0
Goblin adult female killed	5
Goblin adult male killed	15
Goblin corporal killed	25
Hobgoblin sergeant killed	40
Hobgoblin lieutenant killed	150
Hobgoblin captain killed	350
Gak-nis-gogk killed	3,500
Brown bear killed	425
Owlbear killed	400
Ogre killed	175
Ghoul killed	80
Volunteering to stay three weeks to help elves rebuild	50
Illusion successfully disbelieved (on own initiative only)	20
Lock picked (applies to thieves only)	10
Special considerations	*

* Unusual actions, ingenuity, valor, bravery, etc. should be given an award not to exceed 1,500 xp at the DM's discretion.

Continued

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Gak-nis-gogk

ARMOR CLASS: *2*
MOVEMENT: *12"*
HIT DICE: *8+4*
HIT POINTS: *44*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *4 tentacles*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *2 hp each*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Psionic blast, brain eating, spells, illusions*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *90% magic resistance*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *250*
Attack/Defense Modes: *B/FGH*
Disciplines: *Levitation, domination, ESP, body equilibrium, astral projection, probability travel*
SPELLS: *Burning hands, charm person, shield, sleep, darkness 15' radius, invisibility, stinking cloud, dispel magic, protection from normal missiles, wall of fire*

The mind flayer Gak-nis-gogk is a unique 7th-level magic-user, having been trained in this arcane science by some unknown evil denizen in the deep, volcanic underground beneath the Yurtons. In addition, once per day he can cast an *illusion* of permanent duration, covering an area lying within a 20'-square sphere. This *illusion* may be dispelled or disbelieved normally, having only visual components.

Gak-nis-gogk enjoys his tyrannical command of the goblins and continues to delight in his brilliant defeat of the wood elves of Great Allindel. He has hoarded most of the valuable treasure plundered from the elves, though he has yet to identify it (see area 23). Additionally, he carries on his person the following items: *broach of shielding* (with 10 hp remaining), *ring of protection +3, ring of fire resistance.*

Should combat occur and the goblin forces seem to be losing, Gak-nis-gogk immediately flees. He tries to get to area 23 to pick up as much treasure as possible, then goes to area 22 to retrieve his spell books. He then flees through area 24. If his way is blocked, the mind flayer uses his *probability travel* discipline to escape, taking one round to do so.

Gak-nis-gogk has three spell books hidden as described in area 22. Their contents are:

Book 1: *affect normal fires, charm person, detect magic, sleep, write, levitate, stinking cloud, haste, protection from normal missiles, slow*

Book 2: burning hands, magic missile, darkness 15' radius, invisibility, wizard lock, dispel magic, fire trap, ice storm, wall of fire

Book 3: *comprehend languages, read magic, shield, pyrotechnics, web, tongues, fear, minor globe of invulnerability, wall of ice*

Elven Dagger

This weapon, created for elven warrior commanders, is fashioned of a mithral-silver and steel alloy. It possesses the ability to detect giant-class creatures at a range of 200' outdoors, 100' indoors or underground (for a list of giant-class creatures, see the *Players Handbook*, page 24). The blade of this dagger glows a faint white-blue color when such a creature is at the extreme range of its detection ability. The glow intensifies as the giant-class creature gets closer, until the blade is shining with the equivalent of a *light* spell.

This dagger is +3 to hit and to damage giant-class creatures only. When attacking other creatures, it is considered to be a +1 magical weapon, but it strikes and wounds as a normal dagger. If desired, the dagger can be commanded to dim its light or to withhold its radiance when stealth and concealment are important. The blade glows only when giant-class creatures are near, not by any command. Any giant-class creature that holds or touches the weapon receives 1-4 hp damage per round of contact.

XP Value: 200 **GP Value:** 1,600

Dust of Blending

This magical dust is usually found in a small leather bag upon which is drawn many magical sigils in silver foil. Each of the 2-12 cakes of *dust* found in a bag resembles a crumbly chunk of yellow dirt about 3" in diameter.

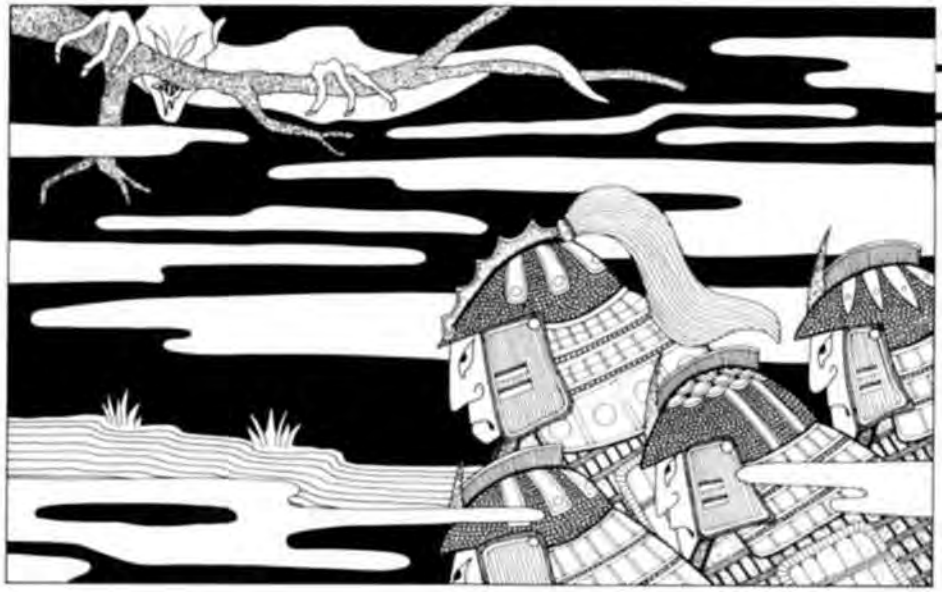
If thrown against a creature or inanimate object, a cake of *dust of blending* explodes in a harmless shower of yellow and red sparks and causes the immediate area to blend in with its surroundings so as to be 90% invisible, even on close inspection. Each cake can cover an area of 50 cu. ft. (such as 2'×5'×5', 2'×2½'×10', etc.). The magic from the *dust of blending* lasts for 1d6+6 turns.

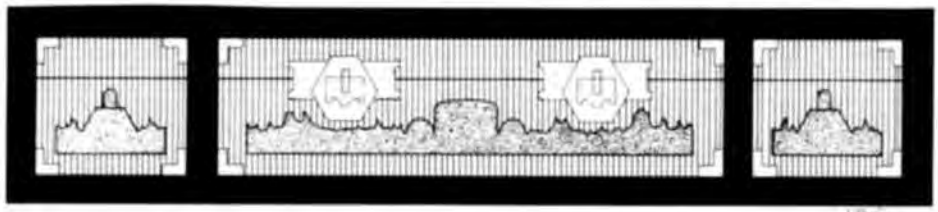
The *dust* can be washed off, thus revealing the object or creature it was meant to conceal. It may also be blown off by winds in excess of 40 MPH. If a creature moves while coated, there is a 10% chance per turn of movement that the *dust* will be shed.

This *dust* was used by the elves to conceal their scouts and positions within the forest while they lay in ambush for the goblin patrols.

XP Value: 1,250 **GP Value:** 5,000

Ω





THE WAITING ROOM OF YEN-WANG-YEH

BY GREG KRAMER

Take a number. Death will be with you shortly.

Artwork by Lynne Taylor

Greg Kramer has been playing the AD&D® game since it came out. He works as a software engineer and is interested in the Oriental game of Go, things Japanese, and windsurfing. He wrote this adventure, his first published work, to introduce his players to the idea of working loyally for a master.

"The Waiting Room of Yen-Wang-Yeh" is an AD&D *Oriental Adventures* module for 4-6 player characters of levels 5-6. The party must include a samurai in service to Gosen Sabero, shugo-daimyo of Hira province in Kozakura (or a similar lord in the Dungeon Master's own campaign). This samurai will be the official leader of the party, which may include other samurai or PCs in Sabero's service but should not include any yakuza or ninja. A 6th-level shukenja would be very helpful, as would a korobokuru of any class.

This module uses the Kozokuran timeline established in module OA1 *Swords of the Daimyo.* That module also presents background information on Kozakura that supplements but is not essential to this adventure.

Adventure Background

The DM should read the following aloud to the players whose characters serve Gosen Sabero:

> It is early summer of the year 1430. You have been summoned by Tachi Yukinara, sage to your master Gosen Sabero, shugo-daimyo of Hira province. Gosen Sabero is, as usual, in the capital attending to his duties.
>
> You all arrive early and are shown into the familiar briefing room. Tachi enters; you all bow respectfully and the samurai leader greets him. After some polite amenities, the sage begins your briefing:
>
> "Hira province was built by the Gosen clan. When the shogun rewarded responsibility for Hira to the first Gosen daimyo 200 years ago, it was a poor backwater. Gosen assigned his three sons to transform it. The eldest commanded the troop levies that secured the peace, the second built this castle and Niitsu-city which surrounds it, and the youngest turned a fishing village into the harbor city of Kushiro. For these many years, the Gosen clan has ruled Hira in peace and harmony. Our

ancestors rest peacefully, most here in Niitsu castle.

"But Gosen Tadahiro, the youngest son, does not. Building such a fine port as Kushiro earned him rest and the gratitude of his descendants. But gangsters infiltrated the work crews, undermining the order of the city even as they built her walls. Gosen Tadahiro strove mightily to cleanse his life-work, but failed. Even today, his great-grandson, Gosen Arihito, who runs Kushiro, cannot uproot the weed.

"Gosen Tadahiro became despondent over this failure. When his time came to retire, he did not seek out a respectable temple or monastery. No, poor man; in his despair and madness he sought out a foolish, foreign sect of hermits.

"These hermits believed that life is nothing but a painful interruption of eternal dreamless sleep, that nothing we do here can amount to anything. They preached that the best course is to do nothing at all, merely to wait for release. So they built tombs and lived in them, waiting for their god of death, Yen-Wang-Yeh.

"For many years I have sought the final resting place of Gosen Tadahiro, at the request of his great-grandnephew, Gosen Sabero. I was able to locate the general area of the hermits' refuge, near a marble quarry in Hochi province. The hermits used slabs of waste marble from the quarry to build their tombs. But I had no way to identify which of the tombs might be Gosen Tadahiro's. The hermits took new names and cut all contact with their former lives upon entering the refuge.

"Then last year, at the Festival of Leaves, I met a man of learning from Hochi. I asked about the hermits, and he presented me with the diary of a wandering holy man who lived at the time of Gosen Tadahiro's disappearance. This holy man visited the hermits and got some of them to talk about their lives. One of the hermits, who used the name Maggot Feast, told of a life so like Gosen Tadahiro's that they must have been the same person.

"I will give you a scroll showing the route to take to the hermits' refuge. But first, I must tell you that I told this same tale three weeks ago to the samurai Otomo Minbu, whom I sent with six of our best foot-soldiers to find and bring back the remains of Gosen Tadahiro. The journey should have taken only two weeks. I do not know what could be delaying Otomo Minbu. He is an experienced samurai; Gosen Sabero trusts him like a son.

"It is your lord's wish that you follow the trail of Otomo Minbu to discover his fate. If he lives in captivity, you are to offer ransom if his captors are honorable, or rescue him if they are not. I will send with you a magical potion to heal him if he lies wounded or plague-stricken. If he is dead, or you can find no trace of him by the time you reach the hermits' refuge, you are to continue his mission to recover Gosen Tadahiro.

"In two days you will leave to find Otomo Minbu, and then perhaps the Waiters on Yen-Wang-Yeh."

The PCs may politely question Tachi Yukinara. He can give a general description of the refuge itself (see page 35) including the pond and spring, and of the surrounding countryside based on the holy man's diary. He knows the common architecture of the tombs and will give the party a scroll depicting the name marker which should stand before the tomb of Maggot Feast (Gosen Tadahiro). The sage can also describe Gosen Tadahiro as having been 5'6" tall, bearded, balding, flabby, and missing the first two fingers of his left hand due to an assassination attempt.

Tachi knows that korobokuru live in the mountains around the refuge but has no special knowledge of the creatures. He does know that Otomo Minbu spent some time in his youth adventuring with korobokuru. Tachi does not know what other monsters might be found around the refuge (he specializes in humankind).

The sage gives the PCs a copy of the map on page 33 and the name-marker scroll. He also provides authorization for six bushi and a sergeant to act as escorts and bearers, but he will not authorize horses or other transport. He gives the PCs travel papers which identify them as being on official business for Gosen Sabero and which authorize them to stay at imperial roadhouses. These posthouses provide a dry, warm place for the night and a bowl of rice in the morning. The PCs must supply anything more that they require.

Last, but not least, Tachi presents the leader of the party with a lacquered box. This is 3' long, 18" wide, and 12" deep, made from ¾"-thick hardwood. The outside is painted with landscape scenes; the inside is decorated with prayers for the soul of Gosen Tadahiro. The box has brass hinges and corners, and the tight-fitting lid is secured by two brass hook latches. It is tied with silk rope to a bamboo frame so that it can be worn like a backpack (encumbrance 300 gp). It is an honor to carry the box, which is meant to contain the remains of Gosen Tadahiro. The party's leader must designate one of the PCs to be responsible for it. After presenting the box, Tachi dismisses the party.

Tachi Yukinara (human sage): AC 10; MV 12"; HD 8d4; hp 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); S 8, I 15, W 15, D 9, C 11, Ch 11, Co 13; AL LN; Major field: humankind (politics, history, law); Minor fields: physical universe, supernatural; Spells: *know history, omen, face;* 67 years old.

Tachi Yukinara is one of Gosen Sabero's most trusted advisors. He is intimately familiar with the current political situation in Hira, and between Hira and the capital. He is the man charged with turning Gosen Sabero's desires for political influence into fact, and is also in charge of the daimyo's adventurers. Yukinara is fiercely loyal to his lord and secretive to the point of paranoia. His older brother is head of the Tachi clan.

For the Dungeon Master

What Tachi Yukinara tells the party is true but not complete. In 1218 (212 years ago), the shogun elevated a loyal samurai, Gosen Noboru, to shugo-daimyo of Hira province in the north of Shinkoku island. With his three sons, Gosen Noboru built Hira into a thriving province. His eldest tamed the countryside, the second built a fine capital, and the third built a busy port city. But the youngest son was lazy; he preferred to let others do the real work while he enjoyed the privileges of his position.

The yakuza who built Kushiro were recruited for the job by Gosen Tadahiro himself. In return for letting them have free rein, Gosen Tadahiro took a split of the profits. In time, it became obvious to everybody who really built and ran

Kushiro. Gosen Tadahiro retained enough pride to feel great shame at having betrayed his father's trust, but when he tried to assert his authority, the yakuza cut off two of his fingers as a reminder that they were the real bosses.

In 1231, an exile from T'u Lung arrived, a holy man banished for offending the religious authorities. The holy man preached that all efforts in life are doomed to failure, so the best one can do is sit patiently waiting for Yen-Wang-Yeh, god of death, to return one to rest. There were a few despondent people in Hira who listened to him, Gosen Tadahiro included. The holy man's followers called themselves Waiters on Yen-Wang-Yeh.

The holy man's message was no more welcome in Kozakura than it was in T'u Lung. He and his followers were forced to seek refuge near a marble quarry in the mountains of Hochi, in an area only recently tamed. The exact location of the refuge, which they called the Waiting Room of Yen-Wang-Yeh, was kept secret to avoid harassment.

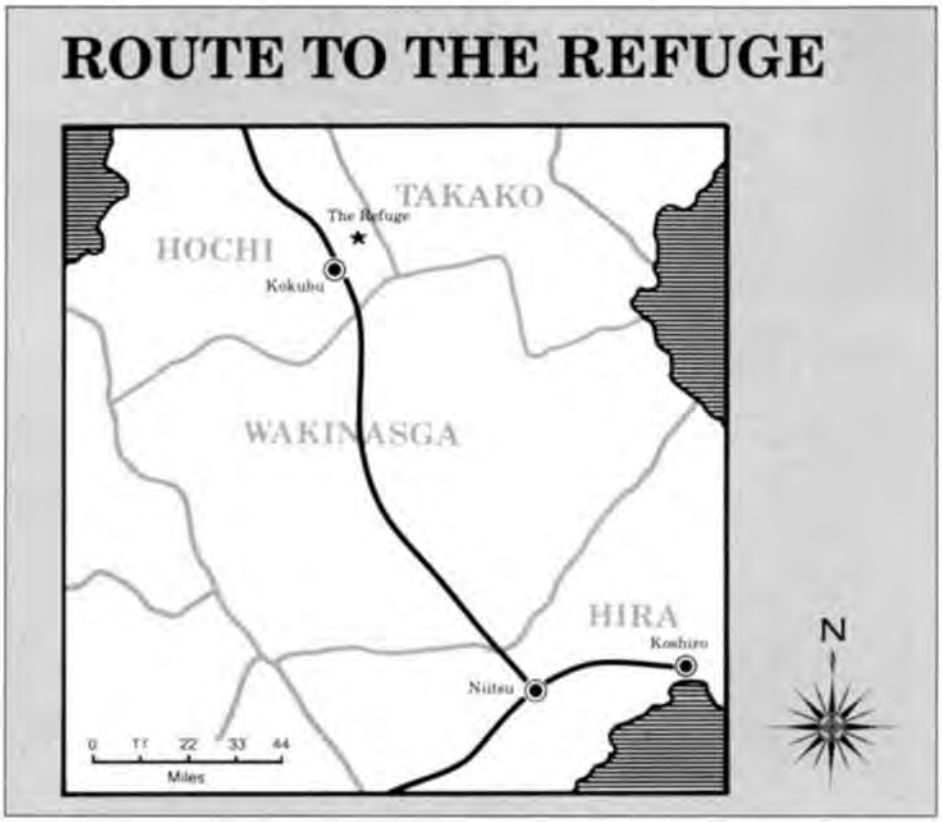
When Gosen Tadahiro gave over his position to his son, declaring his intention to retire into the mountains to wait for death, none of his family objected. They were glad to be rid of the lazy, greedy, self-pitying old man.

Gosen Tadahiro joined the hermits in 1239. After the holy man died in 1245, the cult withered away as the number of recruits fell behind the number of deaths. The cult finally disappeared, and the marble quarry closed. The area was given back to the korobokuru.

Gosen Sabero wants to recover the remains of Gosen Tadahiro and give them a proper funeral, mostly to gain influence over Gosen Tadahiro's great-grandson, Gosen Arihito, who controls Kushiro today. Gosen Sabero plans to ask for concessions from his relative at some future date.

The PCs in Gosen Sabero's service will know who Otomo Minbu is and what he looks like. He is a loyal samurai with a reputation for being hard-working, discrete, and above suspicion. His family has served the Gosen clan for several generations. The family does not know what has happened to him and has no idea what his mission was. Otomo Minbu is known to possess magical items, including an enchanted katana.

It is important for the PCs to remember that their mission is to rescue Otomo Minbu. Only if they are unable to find him are they to take over his mission of recovering the remains of Gosen Tadahiro. The DM must emphasize thought over reckless action, and the PCs must become accustomed to following orders rather than pursuing their own interests.



A Mysterious Visitor

When he awakens the day after seeing Tachi Yukinara, the samurai leading the party discovers that the lacquered box has been stolen (this event cannot be prevented by the PCs; it simply occurs). Before the samurai can do more than alert the household, a visitor is announced. An old man has brought back the box.

The old man humbly introduces himself as Makabe Yoichi. He is, in fact, an elder in the local yakuza clan. The clan arranged to have the box stolen (the details of the theft are left to the DM). They knew that Otomo Minbu disappeared into the mountains three weeks ago with a similar box, and they wanted to know what Gosen Sabero was up to. When Makabe got the box and saw the prayers inside for Gosen Tadahiro, he correctly concluded that Tachi Yukinara had finally found Gosen Tadahiro and was sending the PCs to recover his remains. Makabe Yoichi knows the truth about Gosen Tadahiro and the yakuza, so he is taking this opportunity to tweak Gosen Sabero's nose by reminding him about the mutual debt between the Gosen and Makabe clans.

Makabe does not know what happened to Otomo Minbu. He and his clan will not interfere with the PCs out of respect for Gosen Tadahiro's memory. Makabe has proficiency in etiquette, so his behavior is quite proper. Each PC present should make an intelligence check. If the check succeeds, that PC has noticed glimpses of tattoos on Makabe's wrists and neck — tattoos of the kind usually associated with powerful yakuza.

Makabe Yoichi says: "Sir, I found this box lying open by the road not far from here. When I looked more closely, I saw the name Gosen Tadahiro painted inside. My family owes a debt to Gosen Tadahiro; he brought our ancestors here to help him build Kushiro port. Thus, I felt obligated to return this funerary box to its owner. I asked a passer-by if there were any liegemen of the Gosen clan

living nearby, and she directed me to your gate. How fortunate that my quest is so soon completed, as I have pressing business to which I must attend."

Makabe politely but firmly declines any offer of reward or invitation to remain. He leaves as soon as he can without being rude. It would be very disrespectful to question an elder's sincerity, and positively insulting to accuse him of the theft. If any attempt is made to take Makabe away under duress, a large rescue party appears, made up of yakuza and allies who were loitering the area in case Makabe should need help. They hinder any attempt to follow Makabe when he leaves. The DM will have to flesh out this group if they are needed. They should outnumber the PCs by at least two to one.

If the samurai leader relates this incident to Tachi Yukinara, the sage becomes visibly offended. Tachi makes it clear that he considers Makabe Yoichi and his clan gangsters, and that Makabe's actions and insinuations are insulting. Tachi berates the samurai for permitting the theft and dismisses him without punishment or further explanation.

This should only increase the PCs' curiosity. A few questions in the right places will reveal the true nature of the old man. The same sources can confirm that there is old gossip about Gosen Tadahiro being involved with the yakuza for his own profit. Gosen Tadahiro may not have been the tragic victim of fate Tachi described; he may have brought disaster on himself.

Makabe Yoichi: AC 7; MV 12"; Yak13; hp 41; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, I 16, W 14, D 15, C 9, Ch 16, Co 15; AL LN; Family honor 39; Personal honor 62; MS 95%, HS 85%, OL 82%, PP 105%, HN 40%; Ki power: take half damage from attacks 13 times/day; investigate 68%; Proficiencies: dagger, short sword, gaming, reading/writing Kozakuran and trade tongue, jeweler, tea ceremony, etiquette; Possessions: *ring of protection +2*.

Into the Mountains

After dealing with Makabe Yoichi's visit, the samurai leader can go to the castle garrison. Here, Hidio Gump and six 1st-level bushi are assigned to accompany the party. These NPCs are very trustworthy and stay out of the way, letting the PCs make all the decisions. If the PCs want any special equipment or supplies, they must procure it themselves.

Hidio Gump (human): AC 7; MV 9"; Bus3; hp 29; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, I 14, W 10, D 10, C 16, Ch 11, Co 15; AL LG; Family honor 8; Personal honor 18; Birth: middle class clan of stone masons; NPC reaction modifier 20%; Birthright: none; Proficiencies: naginata specialization, short bow, stone mason, read/write Kozakuran; cut purse 26%; Ki power: +2 levels for one turn/day; Possessions: naginata, short bow (built for strength), 20 normal arrows, two humming-bulb arrows, studded leather armor.

Bushi (6 human): AC 8; MV 9"; Bus1; hp 8 each; #AT 1; Damage by weapon type; statistics unremarkable; AL LN; Possessions: two spears (specialization), knife, padded armor.

The PCs leave Niitsu in the early morning of the next day. Their route takes them northwest, over a good road which rises gradually into the mountains. There are posthouses a day's journey by foot (about 20 miles) apart along the road. On the second day at the above rate, they pass into Wakinasga province, and on the sixth day they reach the remote mura of Kokubu in the easternmost tip of Hochi province.

The garrisons at the posthouses remember Otomo Minbu. If the party asks about him, the PCs are told that he stayed one night about three weeks before, then he and his men continued northwest along the main road.

At Kokubu, the PCs learn that the route to the old marble quarry leaves the main road and follows an abandoned spur north. This track was once as well maintained as the main road but has fallen into disrepair. The path runs along the west bank of a large stream which flows down out of a mountain pass. It will take most of a day for the PCs to travel from Kokubu north up the pass to the abandoned quarry.

If the party asks about Otomo Minbu in Kokubu, they are told the same story as before: he stayed one night, then continued northwest. But if the PCs go on to the next posthouse along the main road, they discover that no Gosen samurai has been there recently. Otomo Minbu, concerned he would be followed by yakuza from the Makabe clan, went along the main road until he was out of sight of Kokubu, then cut cross-country to the spur road leading north. If the players waste too much time combing the countryside for Otomo's trail, the DM should have them run into a helpful woodcutter who can show them the road Otomo took.

Encounters along the way are left to the discretion of the DM. While on the road, the party is in a civilized area, varying from temperate forest to mountain. Once they leave Kokubu going north, the PCs enter a mountain wilderness.

Meeting the Korobokuru

The party reaches the quarry at the end of a day's travel north from Kokubu. The hermits' refuge is about three miles farther north. This area is moderately forested, with pine, spruce, and a few stands of poplars. The soil is sandy and rocky, providing little purchase for ground cover. Game is fairly easy to find, depending on the season.

The first night the party camps near the quarry, the camp is cautiously approached by a small group of korobokuru. If the korobokuru are threatened or treated badly, they withdraw. If welcomed, especially if there is a korobokuru in the party who knows how to welcome them properly, they can provide information.

The korobokuru are led by one called Wakarpa, who does all the talking. He prefers to speak korobokuru, but he does know the trade tongue fairly well. Hidio and the other bushi do not trust the smelly little creatures but will, of course, defer to the PCs.

Wakarpa tells the samurai leader that he recognizes the mon (family emblem) they wear as the same one worn by a mighty warrior who camped here at the first quarter of this moon, about three weeks before. This warrior (Wakarpa calls him Meen-Boo) knew the ways of the korobokuru. He told them he sought the grave of an ancestor who was lost in a valley of hermits. At first, the korobokuru did not know where he meant, but by the description he gave them, they concluded that Meen-Boo meant the village of spirits which lies less than half a day's march (for a korobokuru) north of the quarry.

Wakarpa warned Meen-Boo that the spirits in the village were clever, evil tricksters. Wakarpa told him, and repeats to the PCs, tales of travelers welcomed by a seemingly normal village of humans who invite them to stay for a feast. The travelers are shown to a bathhouse where they relax in the steaming water. Then the evil spirits return to their true forms and fall on the travelers

while they are naked and helpless, turning the baths into stew pots. Wakarpa boasts that korobokuru are immune to such tricks, thanks to the fact that they never bathe.

Despite these dire warnings, Meen-Boo was determined to brave the perils of the valley to find the grave of his ancestor. Wakarpa was so impressed by Meen-Boo's bravery that he sent one of his brothers, Shipish, to guide Meen-Boo and his retainers to the valley of spirits. None of them has returned.

If he is questioned politely, Wakarpa admits that none of his tribe have ever actually entered that valley. After all, he says, what reason would they have?

Wakarpa has a duty to discover the fate of his brother, so if the party is determined to follow Meen-Boo, he insists on going with them as a guide. The PCs are not obligated to him, but they will earn his and his tribe's friendship if they agree to follow him. If they dismiss him, he follows secretly.

The next morning, the korobokuru (except for Wakarpa) leave for their village, which lies seven miles to the northeast. The party may follow Wakarpa or head off on their own along the faint track that leads to the Waiting Room of Yen-Wang-Yeh.

Wakarpa, son of Horkeu of the Pine Tree clan (korobokuru): AC 6; MV 6"; Bar3; hp 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, I 8, W 8, D 16, C 15, Ch 10, Co 5; AL CG; Honor: none; Proficiencies: spear, short bow, hand axe, sword, club, tracking, survival, snare building, tanning; Possessions: leather armor, hand axe, spear.

Korobokuru (6): AC 8; MV 6"; Bar1; hp 8 each; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; statistics unremarkable; AL CG; Possessions: leather armor, spear, club.

Wakarpa comes from a family of fur trappers. His only interest in the hermits' refuge is finding some trace of his brother Shipish. He firmly believes the stories about the village of evil spirits. When he sees the empty tombs, he jumps to the conclusion that the evil spirits have fled rather than face the party. This makes him strut about fearlessly until the first combat encounter. After that, he acts like a serious hunter.

When Shipish is found (see page 40), Wakarpa insists on bringing the remains back to his village for a proper funeral, which will be held the second night after his return. He invites the PCs to attend. If they do, they are made official friends

of the clan; if they refuse, the clan is insulted.

The DM must remember the restrictions on barbarians like Wakarpa regarding magic. The only forms he will tolerate are minor shukenja spells and potions. He will not knowingly allow any spell to be cast on him. If he suspects that the party has magical items, he closely examines everything they give him for signs of magical contamination.

The Waiting Room of Yen-Wang-Yeh

The refuge is a branch of a winding pass that climbs northward into the mountains. A small stream flows from the refuge to join a larger course down the pass. The entrance to the refuge is a narrow V between steep rocky slopes. Beyond this to the west, the pass opens up into a gentler-sloped oblong bowl, just under one mile across at the middle and about two miles long.

The refuge is unnaturally quiet; no birds sing and no flowers bloom among the gloomy stands of pine and spruce. The sun seems dimmed, and the nights are pitch black despite the half-moon. Even at night there is silence; not even

crickets sing here. For their entire stay in the refuge, every member of the party is oppressed with tension, as if waiting for something dreadful that could happen at any moment. If any characters sleep in the refuge, their rest is disturbed by morbid dreams of their own deaths (increase the amount of sleep needed by 25%).

Near the center of the refuge is an artificial pond held back by an old retaining wall. The water flows sluggishly due to the heavy growth of water weeds which clog the channels through the wall. This has caused the pond to spread out, making its low banks quite marshy. The pond water is silty and bad-tasting but safe to drink. The stream which feeds the pond flows down from a spring at the head of the refuge in a winding, rocky bed. The water in the stream is clear, cold, and delicious.

The refuge is prone to fog year round. The DM should roll 1d10 every day. If the roll is 1 to 4, there is fog in the morning; 5 to 7, evening fog; otherwise no fog. Morning fog sets in an hour before sunrise, and evening fog begins an hour before sunset. All such fog is heavy and lasts for 1-4 hours. The fog has no unusual effects, but the local korobokuru will not willingly stay in it. The inhabitants of the refuge know that the place is prone to fog and use it to cover their attacks. They suffer the same movement and observation penalties as PCs but never become lost in the fog. At its height, the fog fills the entire refuge from the spring above the pond to the entrance between the cliffs.

Random Encounters

The DM should roll 1d8 every four hours the party does not spend searching tombs. A roll of 1 indicates a random encounter occurs. During periods of fog, roll only once regardless of how long the fog lasts. When an encounter is indicated, roll 1d10 and consult the appropriate column on the Hermits' Refuge Encounters Table.

None of the hermits, gaki, buso, rats, or spiders that live in the refuge have any valuable possessions. Goblin rats and goblin spiders have normal treasure in their lairs (as determined by the Random Tomb Generation tables on page 38).

The Spring

The pond is fed from a spring at the head of the valley of the hermits' refuge. The area around the spring is noticeably more pleasant than the rest of the gloomy refuge. Here the birds sing and flowers bloom in the sun. If they have the means, the PCs may *commune* with the lesser nature spirit of the spring. The spirit is glad to help, hoping that the party can at least partially dispel the gloom left by the hermits. It asks only that they clear the weeds from the pond.

Clearing the weeds takes 16 man-hours of work. It allows the water to flow faster, draining the growing marsh. If the party works clearing weeds in the morning or evening, fog develops automatically, and a crimson death attacks at the first opportunity. It looks for a victim who is in the water but not near any other character. After its first victim is dead, or if the crimson death is reduced to fewer than half its original hit points, it retreats toward its lair. The spirit of the spring knows about the crimson death and its lair but will not think to warn the party (it is no threat to *her*).

Lesser crimson death: AC 0 (4 after feeding); MV 12" (6" after feeding); HD 5; hp 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2-20; SA fluid drain; SD surprise, +2 or better weapon to hit (+1 or better after feeding); 100% magic resistance; AL NE; MM2/32. This horrific creature lives in a hole among the rocks at the base of the retaining wall of the pond. The entrance to its lair may be found as a concealed door. The lair is partly below water and big enough to hold only one person at a time. In the water hangs a net holding a greased leather bag, hidden here by a secretive hermit. The bag contains a *short sword +1, sling +1* (to hit), and several (one for each PC) miniature jade carvings (netsuke) worth 100 ch'ien each. The net itself is a *net of spirit snaring.* The crimson death is a unique monster and may not be encountered more than once.

The spirit of the spring shows its good side by answering questions as well as it can, unless the party is rude or overly demanding. It can give precise directions to the tomb of Maggot Feast (it does not know the name Gosen Tadahiro). The spirit knows what happened to Otomo Minbu and can describe Otomo's current situation (see page 39). It will not volunteer information since it cannot know what might be important, nor can it give advice on how to deal with any of the problems it describes.

Hermits' Refuge Encounters Table

Day	Night	Fog	Encounter
1-2	1	1	5-50 giant rats (AC 7; MV 12"//6"; HD ½; hp 2 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA disease; AL N; MM1/81)
3-4	2	2	1-8 giant spiders (AC 4; MV 3"*12"; HD 4+4; hp 21 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA poison; AL CE; MM1/90)
5	3-4	—	2-12 goblin rats (AC 7; MV 9"; HD 3; hp 13 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 or by weapon type; SA disease; SD shape change; AL LE; OA/121)
6	5	3	1 goblin spider (AC 4; MV 18"; HD 6; hp 24; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8/1-8; SA surprise, grasp; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; AL NE; OA/121)
7-8	6-7	4-6	1-4 jiki-niku-gaki (AC 6; MV 12"/6"; HD 3; hp 14; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-8; SD *invisibility, polymorph self, passwall;* immune to *charm, hold, drowsy insect, sleep* spells; regenerate 1 hp/turn; AL CE; OA/119)
9	8	7	1 shikki-gaki [not Gosen Tadahiro] (see page 41 for statistics)
10	—	—	1 hermit (see page 38 for statistics; actually tagamaling buso at night)
—	9	8	1 tagamaling buso (see page 38 for statistics)
—	—	9-10	1 lesser crimson death (see statistics at right)
—	10	—	1 tigbanua buso (AC 4; MV 12"; HD 8+2; hp 40; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-10; SA fear, disease; AL CE; OA/117; there is only one such monster in the refuge. After it is killed, treat this result as 1-4 tagamaling buso, as per the statistics on page 38).

In particular, the spirit knows that Otomo is under the control of a yellow musk creeper, but it does not know how to free Otomo from that control. The spirit of the spring will not respond to a second *commune* spell until after a full cycle of the moon has passed.

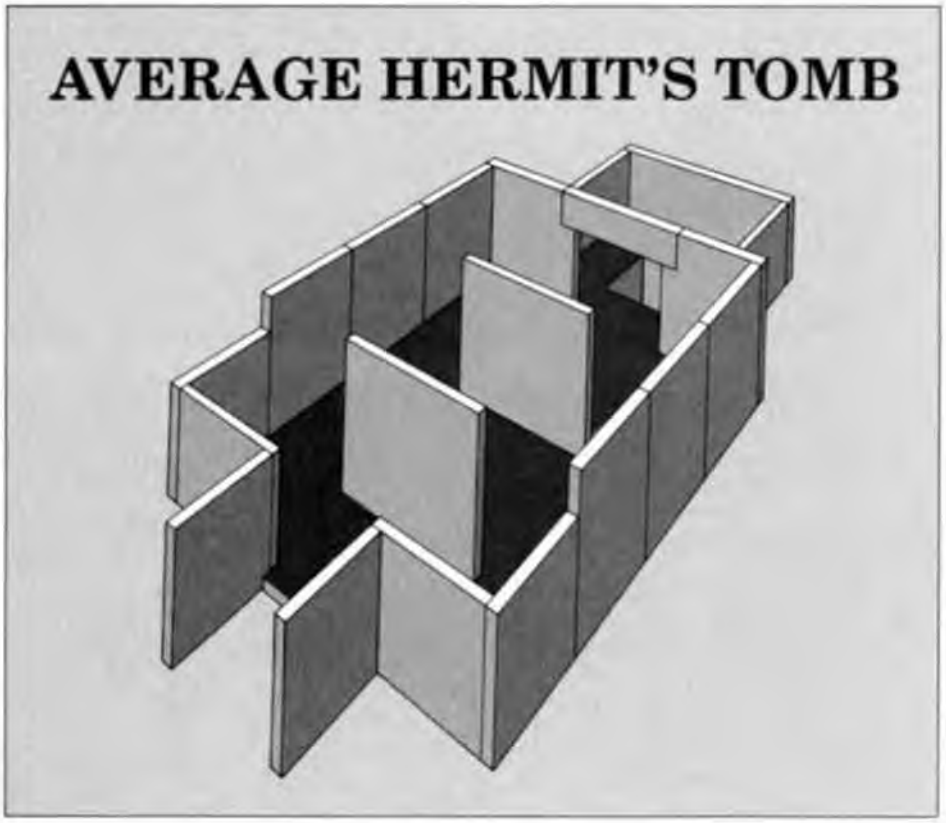
As the spirit can tell the party, Otomo Minbu arrived in the hermits' refuge with his six bushi and the korobokuru Shipish. They searched from tomb to tomb until they found Maggot Feast. Otomo Minbu entered the tomb first, alone. He found a yellow musk creeper growing in the innermost room but was immediately overcome by its pollen attack and transformed into a yellow musk zombie. Minbu ordered his bushi to submit to the creeper's mind-destroying attack: four died, two became zombies. Shipish resisted and was killed outright by Minbu. The spirit knows where the three zombies are but not what they plan to do to intruders.

The spirit also knows that Maggot Feast has become a shikki-gaki, transformed by his greed for the opals beneath his tomb. The creeper was transplanted as a sprout by Maggot Feast to act as a guard. A few hermits stayed on even after the quarry closed. Most of them were killed by monsters wandering down out of the mountains. Some became gaki, and some were attacked by a tigbanua buso and transformed into tagamaling busos. These creatures still live in the refuge, in hermit form during the day. The tigbanua buso sometimes passes through, but since it does not lair here, the spirit knows little about it.

The Tombs of the Hermits

The tombs in the hermits' refuge all follow the same basic plan. They are built along and partly into the slopes of the sides of the refuge, with the excavated dirt piled on top. The walls and ceilings are slabs of poor quality marble, waste from the quarry. The floors are sometimes bare dirt, sometimes paved with smaller marble slabs.

The entry is narrow, with a low ceiling and a high step up into the tomb proper. This puts the person entering in the correct attitude (stooped over or on his knees) to pass before the image of Yen-Wang-Yeh which is carved or painted on the front of the slab set upright just inside the entrance. Openings on either side of this slab allow access to the first room.



This first room is usually about 10' square with a 6' ceiling. The walls are decorated with murals depicting the triumphs and achievements of the owner. In fairly intact tombs, close inspection of these murals reveals that all is not well. There are subtle reminders of the transience of the events depicted. Something done at one point is undone at another. The overall impression is one of futility. The far wall also has openings on both sides leading into the second room.

This second room is about the same size as the first. The murals here depict the defeats and sorrows of the owner. In the far wall is a low opening, about 3' wide and 4' high, which leads to the innermost room.

This last room is much smaller, about 6' × 8' with a 5' ceiling. The walls here are decorated with scenes of death and funerals. In the center of the room is set a hatch of wood about 3' square. The hatch has no hinges, just a handle of rope or woven bamboo fiber.

Lifting the hatch reveals a shaft which angles back toward the entrance. The stones of the shaft form a steep but safe stepladder. The shaft is about 3' square and leads down to a cramped chamber, 6' × 3' × 4' high, about 10' beneath the tomb. Here is found the only furnishing in the tomb: the hermit's coffin. This is where the hermit spent each night, hoping to be released from life in his sleep.

In front of the entry to each tomb was set a name marker, like those in cemeteries. These were carved with the assumed name of the hermit inside.

Many of the tombs have collapsed at least partially, due to their poor construction. The up-slope slabs tend to be pushed over by the loose dirt and rocks flowing downhill. Sometimes they fall over entirely, bringing the ceiling down on top of them. The shaft down to the burial chamber is rarely collapsed.

Searching for Maggot Feast

The party can find Gosen Tadahiro's tomb by searching the refuge until they stumble across the right one. This is how Otomo Minbu proceeded. Roll 2d6 + 4 to determine how many tombs the party must locate before they get the right one. For example, if the dice come up 3 and 5, the 12th tomb found contains Gosen Tadahiro.

The party can find one tomb for each

2-9 turns of searching in daylight. Double this time at night or in fog. Each tomb is hidden from all others by slopes, rock, and trees.

For each tomb found, except for Gosen Tadahiro's, roll 1d6 twice and consult the Random Tomb Generation Tables. The first roll tells how intact the tomb is; the second tells whether the name marker is still in place. Then roll 1d10 to determine what, if anything, lairs in the tomb.

If the name marker is present and undamaged, the carving on it may be easily compared to the scroll sent by Tachi Yukinara. The DM should make a secret intelligence check for the character making the comparison, adding +4 if he is literate. If the check succeeds, tell the player whether this is the right tomb. If the check fails, roll a second die (any type). If the roll comes up odd, say this is the right tomb (though it isn't); if it comes up even, say it is not. If the marker is damaged, divide the character's intelligence by 2 for this check. For example, a character with 15 intelligence who is literate needs a roll of 19 or less to correctly identify an intact marker, but 11 or less if it is damaged.

Spells such as *know history* work regardless of the condition of the marker, as long as a marker is present. If the marker is missing, the walls inside the tombs are as good as a damaged marker for identification.

Roll for every tomb the party finds except for Gosen Tadahiro's. His tomb is 40% collapsed, and he has removed the name marker (it is in the burial chamber). This tomb's inhabitants are described later.

Any tomb with a tagamaling buso/hermit is fairly intact, and the name marker is present and undamaged, regardless of the first two tomb generation rolls. During the day, these creatures take the form of ancient hermits of the Waiters on Yen-Wang-Yeh. Any hermit whose tomb is approached is very upset at the disturbance, but if the party is apologetic and makes an offer of simple food, the hermit may engage in a short conversation. If asked for directions to the tomb of Maggot Feast (none knows the name Gosen Tadahiro), any hermit has a 35% chance of being able to provide them. The hermits' only concern is waiting patiently for death, but they would never consider doing anything to rush Yen-Wang-Yeh.

If the PCs camp within four miles of the refuge the night after meeting such a hermit, they are attacked by 1-6 tagamaling buso, including the hermit they met. During the night, these creatures are in tagamaling buso form. If the tomb lair of a tagamaling buso is entered at night, there is a 60% chance that it is out looking for prey; otherwise it is lying in its coffin. For each turn intruders spend in such a tomb, roll 1d10. On a 1, the tagamaling buso returns or emerges from the burial chamber. In either case, it attacks immediately and fights to the death.

Random Tomb Generation Tables

State of collapse (roll 1d6)

1-3	The tomb is completely collapsed.
4-5	The tomb is 20% to 80% collapsed (roll 2d4 and multiply by 10)
6	The tomb is fairly intact.

Name marker (roll 1d6)

1-2	The name marker is missing.
3-5	The marker is present but damaged.
6	The marker is in place and undamaged.

Inhabitants (roll 1d10; subtract 3 if tomb is completely collapsed, add 3 if tomb is fairly intact; see "Random Encounters" for statistics)

3 or less	None
4-5	5-50 giant rats
6-7	1-8 giant spiders
8	1-4 goblin rats
9	1 6-HD goblin spider and 2-8 giant spiders
10	1 jiki-niku-gaki
over 10	1 hermit (during day) or 1 tagamaling buso (at night)

Hermit of Yen-Wang-Yeh: AC 10; MV 12"; zero-level human; hp 1-6; #AT nil; AL LN; turns into tagamaling buso at night. Hermits met as random encounters are cautiously foraging or fetching water. They avoid sunlit areas, especially the clearing around the spring. Hermits attempt to avoid or ignore the party. Getting any response from a hermit requires patience, extreme politeness, and the offer of simple food or help.

Tagamaling buso: AC 5; MV 12"; hp 1-6; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-8; AL CE; OA/117; turns into hermit at daybreak. A tagamaling buso is mindless, savage, and hungry.

Gosen Tadahiro's Tomb

Eventually the party will find Maggot Feast, either by blind searching or by following directions from a hermit or the spirit of the spring. The tomb is built into a moderately steep rocky slope in a loose stand of spruce. One spruce tree grows on the loose soil piled on the roof of the entry. A second spruce's roots wind down the back wall of the second room.

This tomb has no name marker; Gosen Tadahiro has hidden it in his burial chamber. The left (upslope) side of the entry has been pushed over so far that its top touches the opposite side. Dirt and rocks have slid downhill, exposing the roots of the spruce which leans out over the entry like a cat at a mousehole. The tree is firmly rooted and in no danger of falling. The interior of the tomb is pitch black; the pall of silent anticipation seems thicker here.

None of the beings inside the tomb will come out, even if the party camps nearby. If the party waits more than an hour before going in, the DM should start rolling for random encounters.

When judging actions, especially combat, inside the tomb, the DM must remember three things. First, the area is cramped. This limits the number of characters who can fight effectively and the types of weapons they can use. Refer to the weapons' space requirements in the *Players Handbook*, page 38, and in *Oriental Adventures*, page 42. Second, the floor of this tomb is unevenly paved with buckled and split slabs of rock which are strewn with loose dirt and gravel. Combatants must make dexterity checks to stay upright when they miss badly (unmodified "to hit" roll of 1 or 2) and when they are hit hard (any blow doing the normal maximum or

greater damage or having special effects). For this purpose only, the zombies have 15 dexterity and Gosen Tadahiro has 18 dexterity. Third, the zombies are controlled by a plant; treat them as mindless automatons. They endlessly repeat their drill until they are restrained, or until they or the creeper are destroyed. They ignore any character who falls down as if he had been killed.

If the party should fight the zombies, they will almost certainly win, though the victory may be costly. Once combat starts, especially after a few stray blows or bodies have hit the walls, dust and dirt filter down from the ceiling. The tomb will not collapse, but let the PCs worry. Fighting the zombies, however, goes against the party's mission to rescue Otomo Minbu. Considerable cleverness and forethought will be required to get the samurai and his retainers out of their predicament.

The DM should read the following aloud to the player of the first PC to enter the tomb:

> The narrow, low passage forces you to crouch and turn slightly sideways to avoid scraping your shoulders. About 6' in, your foot finds a 6" step up. Beyond the step, the entrance opens into a passage running at right angles to the entry. The wall facing you is only 5' long, with openings on both sides. To the left, dirt and rock have spilled around the slab, half blocking that opening. To the right, the passage is clear. You hear nothing. In the dim light from behind, you can see dust floating down from the ceiling.
>
> The ceiling does not rise to compensate for the step; you are more bent over than before. Through some trick of fate, a few dim shafts of light faintly illuminate the wall in front of you, revealing the bas-relief shape of a man. He looms over you as if rising from a kneeling position. His left hand is on his hip, the other reaches for something obscured by the piled dirt. He glares at you like a high lord at a tardy underling. His eyes, oddly bright in the dark face, seems to follow you. You guess this to be Yen-Wang-Yeh, the god of the hermits' depressing cult.

If the dirt is dug away from Yen-Wang-Yeh's right hand, it can be seen that he is reaching for a scythe. The image is enamel over a bas-relief carved in marble. Close inspection reveals that the workmanship is barely adequate; the image is worthless.

When the character looks around the corner to the right, read the following:

> You can dimly see a small room about 10' square with a 6' ceiling. Directly across from you is an opening like the one you are in, about 3' wide by 6' high. The right (outer) wall runs upright from the entrance to the opening. The slab in the far left corner leans in but is supported by a large pile of dirt which seems to fill most of the left side of this room. The opening in the far corner is almost filled by this dirt. The floor is uneven; many of the cobbles are buckled, and they are covered with gravel. (If the PC has infravision, say:) There is a hint of warmth to your left behind the decorated slab, and faint movement in the opposite opening.

There is too much dirt piled inside the tomb to have leaked in through the cracks in the walls and ceilings. It is from the tunneling for opals done below by Gosen Tadahiro.

A PC who peeks around the corner to the left of the slab sees two or three humanlike figures. Check for surprise and initiative, as one of the figures (Otomo) makes a sudden movement with a flash of light, then lunges for the PC (the zombies are not surprised unless the PCs were absolutely silent).

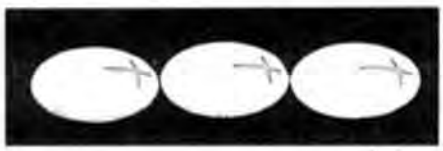
The warmth noted by PCs with infravision is from Otomo Minbu and the other two zombies. They are not at a normal, healthy temperature. The movement in the far opening is the yellow musk creeper gently waving its fronds. The flash of light lasts only a segment and does not penalize the character; it is caused by Otomo executing a fast draw attack (iaijutsu) with his *katana +2*. This attack automatically misses, allowing an unsurprised PC to either withdraw or return the attack.

During the second and following rounds, Otomo falls back toward the far opening to draw the character within range of the creeper's pollen attack. The zombie bushi prod from behind with their spears. If the intruder flees, the zombies will not pursue. After they are left alone for two rounds, they resume their previous positions. If anybody comes into the tomb after that, the zombies repeat their actions as described above.

Any of the characters in the party (including Wakarpa) can recognize Otomo Minbu as soon as they see him. It should be obvious that he is not in control of himself. His skin is sallow, his eyes are glazed over and stare blankly, and his movements, once fluid and graceful, seem mechanical. He resembles a badly handled puppet. Samurai and any characters with etiquette proficiency will know that Otomo would be disgraced if he were killed in this condition. And, as the PCs were specifically ordered to rescue Otomo, they will be disobeying their lord Gosen Sabero and insulting the Otomo clan if they destroy him. It would be better for their personal honor to be killed by Otomo rather than to kill him. For the consequences of killing Otomo Minbu, see "Kuei."

Yellow musk zombie (Otomo Minbu): AC 3; MV 12"; attack as 2-HD monster (once 7th level); hp 55; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL NE; FF/97; *chain mail +2, katana +2*.

Yellow musk zombie (bushi) (2): AC 8; MV 9"; attack as 2-HD monster (once 2nd level); hp 10 each; #AT 1; Dmg by



weapon type; AL NE; FF/97; padded armor, spear.

Rescuing Otomo Minbu

The party may know how Otomo Minbu was possessed if they asked the spirit of the spring. But unless they have had experience with yellow musk zombies, they will not know how to free him. If they include Wakarpa in the discussion, the korobokuru can help the PCs.

This is not the only yellow musk creeper in these mountains. Wakarpa helped free a woman of his tribe who had been possessed by one of these horrors. When they dug up the root of the creeper and hacked it to bits, the woman became docile, like a sleepwalker. The korobokuru kept her alive for three weeks by pouring water and soup down her throat, but she died anyway. Wakarpa has no suggestions on how to get past Otomo to the creeper's root, and he will not attempt it himself.

If the PCs decide to go around Otomo by digging into the tomb, Hidio Gump will be a lot of help. He is from a family of stoneworkers and can show the bushi how to move the slabs using logs as levers and rollers. With his guidance, the bushi can clear off one ceiling slab in two turns with proper tools or five turns using substitutes. Shovels and such could easily be fabricated from spears. Once a slab is cleared, it takes three turns to shift it enough to allow a human to enter. The two spruces growing on the tomb will not interfere with this effort.

The root of the yellow musk creeper grows in a pile of dirt in the innermost room of the tomb. It was transplanted here as a sprout by Gosen Tadahiro. Two blooms and one bud sprout directly from the heart root. If any new buds are created, they appear here. The aerial roots, used in the plant's mind-draining attack, form a screen across the opening into this room. Any character putting his head through the opening is subject to that attack. A lit torch causes the roots to pull back but will not damage the heart root.

Several thick tendrils grow through the opening into the second room of the tomb; this room is also partly filled with piled dirt. The stalks grow across this pile, then rise up to screen the opening to the first room. Six blooms and three buds sway gently on the tops of these stalks. As buds bloom in the course of combat, these will open before the buds in the innermost room. The blooms attack with their pollen at the first opportunity.

The bodies of Shipish and the four bushi are buried in the dirt around the heart root. Their equipment, including 10 spears, Otomo's daikyu of quality, and a lacquered box similar to the one the party has, is buried in the room where the zombies were waiting.

After the heart root of the creeper is destroyed, the zombies become docile and may be kept alive by force-feeding. Otomo Minbu will live two weeks, the bushi one. The *elixir of health* which Tachi Yukinara gave the PCs can be used instead of the spells *neutralize poison* and *heal* to cure one zombie only.

For the consequences of killing Otomo Minbu, see "Kuei."

Yellow musk creeper: AC 7; MV nil; HD 3; hp 21; #AT 8; Dmg special; SA intelligence drain; AL N; FF/97.

Otomo Minbu (human): AC 3; MV 12"; Sam7; hp 55; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, I 15, W 13, D 15, C 15, Ch 16, Co 11; AL LG; Family honor 31; Personal honor 45; Birth: 6th rank, 34 years old; NPC reaction modifier 60%; Birthright: two horses, daikyu of quality, property share (×3); Ancestry: clan owns a small mountain which it mines for iron ore, and the clan is an ancient ally of the Gosen clan; Proficiencies: katana specialization, daikyu specialization, horsemanship, calligraphy, painting, poetry, heraldry; Languages: Kozakuran, korobokuru, trade tongue, lawful good; Possessions: daikyu of quality, *katana +2*, *chain mail +2*. Otomo Minbu has a very strong sense of honor and is fiercely loyal to his lord and the Otomo clan. He would literally die before betraying either.

If by some chance any of the bushi zombies are cured, they have the same statistics as given for the bushi accompanying the PCs.

Gosen Tadahiro

Gosen Tadahiro grew up in luxurious leisure. He became accustomed to having everything handed to him and resented having to work to earn his pleasures. So when his father assigned him the formidable task of turning the fishing village of Kushiro into a decent port, he sought to avoid putting much of his own effort into the project by recruiting yakuza to do his dirty work. They organized the work parties, imported the skilled labor, and procured the materials in return for Tadahiro's tacit permission to pursue their own activities: gambling, smuggling, and extortion.

Gosen Tadahiro foolishly thought that he could control these thugs with the threat of his father's troops. But exposing them meant exposing his own skimming and kick-backs. To drive home the point that his future depended on keeping their good will, the yakuza cut off the first two fingers of his left hand.

As he grew old and saw the harm he had allowed the yakuza to do, Gosen Tadahiro came to regret his alliance bitterly. Then he heard the preaching of the holy man of Yen-Wang-Yeh. The message that life is futile, that all one's best efforts come to nothing, fit Gosen Tadahiro's depressed mood. He turned over his duties to his son and disappeared into the mountains.

While he was digging out his own burial chamber, Gosen Tadahiro found an opal. It was not high quality, and he had just made a sincere vow of poverty, so he threw it into the pond. But as the years passed, Tadahiro became obsessed with the idea that he might be sitting on a fortune. He began secretly digging tunnels out from his burial chamber, piling the dirt in his tomb.

This became his major occupation. He did not stop after contracting cholera. Even after he died, he kept digging, grubbing after the soft, milky stones though he was no longer human. Gosen Tadahiro had become a shikki-gaki.

The gaki that was once Gosen Tadahiro is very possessive of its treasure. It found and transplanted the yellow musk creeper to protect its hoard. If it hears fighting in the tomb, it climbs up the shaft to wait at the hatch. If the hatch is uncovered and lifted, the gaki attacks. It turns *invisible* and flies up out of the shaft in insect form, changing to gaki form while hovering over the character who lifted the hatch so as to drop onto that character's shoulders. As soon as it attacks, it becomes visible. As far as the characters know, the gaki appears from thin air. Suddenly, a gaunt, naked man covered in filth and open sores, with scraggly hair covering his head and shoulders, is clinging to his victim's back, scratching and biting.

Each round the DM should make a secret intelligence check for each character who can see the gaki. As soon as the check succeeds, that character notices that the gaki is missing the first two fingers of its left hand.

To complete Otomo Minbu's mission, the gaki must be destroyed or captured (possibly using the *net of spirit snaring* from the lesser crimson death's lair). If the PCs retreat, the gaki will not pursue. It closes the hatch and waits while it regenerates.

As soon as the gaki is reduced to zero or fewer hit points, it collapses into a heap. Over the next two rounds it crumbles to dust and bones, which the PCs need to gather up and put into the lacquered box to bring to Tachi. If the gaki is captured, it crumbles into dust and bones at the first sunrise after it is removed from the refuge.

Once the gaki is out of the way, the PCs will be able to descend to the burial chamber. The narrow tunnels going off in every direction from this tiny chamber appear to be clumsily dug; they each extend 20-120' and contain no treasure. In the chamber itself is an old wooden coffin half-filled with soft, irregular, milky-white stones. These are mostly common opals, virtually worthless. But any character with proficiency as a jeweler can pick out one gem-quality opal (base value 500 tael) for each two turns spent sorting (up to 2d4+6 gems total). At the head of the coffin stands the undamaged name marker of Maggot Feast.

Shikki-gaki: AC 4; MV 12"/6"; HD 5; hp 24; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4; SA disease; SD *invisibility, polymorph self, passwall;* immune to disease, poison *charm, hold, drowsy insect, sleep* spells; regenerates 2 hp/turn; +1 or better weapon to hit; AL CE; OA/119-120.

Kuei

If Otomo Minbu dies while still under the creeper's control, his mission unfulfilled, his soul will not be able to rest. It returns the following night as a kuei. The kuei attempts to possess the character bearing the remains of Gosen Tadahiro, or the samurai leader if Gosen Tadahiro is still at large. It makes its first attempt just as the sun disappears behind the horizon the first evening after Otomo's death, repeating the attack until it succeeds. It then compels the possessed character to either return directly to Niitsu castle with the remains or to the hermits' refuge to recover them by direct assault.

The kuei remembers all that happened to Otomo Minbu and recognizes the characters who were responsible for his death. But it is driven to complete Otomo's mission to return the remains of Gosen Tadahiro, and this task takes precedence over personal vengence. If Gosen Sabero finds out that the PCs killed Otomo, he will avenge that insult.

The kuei will not tolerate further interference from the party and will use deadly force if necessary. It may respond to polite, apologetic offers to help. If the PCs return any items of Otomo's weapons and armor that they took (he was wearing his armor and wielding his katana; his daikyu was in the dirt with the spears) and vow on their lives to obey him, he will tolerate their presence but will not trust them. Note that kuei do not sleep, even while possessing a human victim.

The kuei and its victim will not leave the refuge without Gosen Tadahiro. When it eventually returns to Niitsu, the kuei reports to Tachi Yukinara, relating fully and truthfully what happened. Tachi dismisses Otomo, and the kuei departs, leaving the PCs to explain themselves. The PCs committed murder and treason by killing Otomo Minbu in direct contradiction to their orders. The most likely punishment is death.

Kuei: AC –4; MV 18"; HD 5; hp 23; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA possession; SD +3 weapon to hit; become ethereal at will; immune to normal fire, cold, *ESP, charm, enchantment, illusion,* water spells and psionic attack; AL LN; OA/124.

Just Rewards

The DM will have to use his own judgment in wrapping up this adventure because of the wide range of possible outcomes. The following general guidelines should be adapted to the PCs' actions in the adventure.

The mission of the PCs was to find and rescue Otomo Minbu. If they were foolhardy enough to kill him, and Gosen Sabero finds out about it, he will punish them for their treachery. Sabero authorizes a blood feud against the party by the Otomo clan. The DM will have to decide how to resolve this feud, but the clan will certainly put a lot of effort into tracking down and killing every member of the party. The clan has samurai and bushi members, and possibly wu jen, sohei, and shukenja as well. They have contacts with the yakuza clans in Hira but would hire ninja only as a last resort. The declaration of a blood feud is tantamount to a death sentence for the PCs.

If the party returns with Otomo Minbu in good health, Gosen Sabero will reward them. He authorizes a stipend of 1 ch'ien per level to be paid four times a year for as long as the PCs are in his service. Also, the Otomo clan presents each PC with a weapon of quality of the character's choice.

Otomo Minbu's mission was to recover the remains of Gosen Tadahiro. Otomo's reward for success is to be made jito over an important tract of land, a fortified ridge overlooking Kushiro. If the PCs complete Minbu's mission, Gosen Sabero will pay the costs of training the next time each of them fills a proficiency slot.

If the PCs do not return with Gosen Tadahiro, Gosen Sabero dismisses them from his service and banishes them from Hira. Whatever happens to Otomo Minbu, his clan expects the return of his belongings: the daikyu of quality and the magical katana and chain mail. The daikyu and katana are distinctive enough that they could be recognized by anybody familiar with Otomo Minbu. The PCs may keep whatever other items of value they have found.

The DM should make awards of experience and honor based more on how the PCs act than what rewards they receive. Ω

OUT OF THE ASHES

BY GRANT S. BOUCHER

Flame is back – and is he *mad!*

Artwork by Carol Heyer

Grant Boucher got engaged to Julie Garcia in January and is finally happy with the entire universe. He has written sections for the upcoming AD&D® 2nd Edition Monstrous Compendium, *as well as West End Games'* Star Wars Imperial Sourcebook *and the first* Star Wars Galaxy Guidebook, Character Profiles from Star Wars: A New Hope. *This is Grant's fifth appearance in DUNGEON® Adventures. "Ancient Blood," a Norse-Gothic adventure, is still awaiting publication.*

"Out of the Ashes" is a high-level AD&D game adventure for 6-10 characters of 8th-12th level. Although it is a sequel to "Into the Fire," which appeared in DUNGEON® Adventures #1, it is by no means necessary to have played that adventure first, as "Out of the Ashes" stands alone. If you have played or intend to play "Into the Fire," see "Linking the Two Adventures" in this module.

The party should be a well-balanced group of thieves, clerics, magic-users, and fighters of primarily good alignment. The adventure fits into an unexplored mountain range on any campaign world.

The character of the arch-lich Vecna appears in the *Dungeon Masters Guide,* in the section on artifacts describing the *eye* and *hand of Vecna* (pages 157-158). Since Vecna and his remains never truly appear within this adventure, there should be little problem integrating this particular legend into the campaign. If the DM finds any conflicts in using the legend of Vecna in his own campaign, the tale detailed herein can be altered by substituting the eye and skull of Shinta the Undying.

Before play begins, the DM should draw or trace a copy of the lower section of the large-area map, copying only the city of Justiminium (area A), the forest of Nograheim (area B), and the pass through the mountains (area D). This is the map the PCs will receive when they are hired for the adventure.

Adventure Background

Long ago, a young and inexperienced red dragon named Flame found a ring. Like all good magic-users, he tried to test it by jumping up and down, burning his claw, falling off a low ledge, and attempting to turn himself invisible. None of his first efforts to identify the ring worked. Then he made a *wish* that he would return after his death. The ring

glowed very brightly, but he received no immediate sign that his open-ended, poorly phrased *wish* had been granted, and he assumed that he had wasted a very powerful spell. Trying again with an easier *wish* ("I'd like a dozen elves for breakfast"), he found that he had used up his magical ring's only charge. Unknown to Flame, however, his first *wish* had indeed been granted — and by Tiamat herself.

Dragons hoard treasure for a number of reasons, including personal greed, but it is said that a dragon who dies of old age takes his treasure with him to Tiamat's lair, where the size of his "donation" determines his place in her royal court of dragons. Recently, Flame died at the hands of a group of adventurers (see "Into the Fire," DUNGEON Adventures #1), a rather common but dishonorable way for a dragon to meet his end. Tiamat could thus take none of Flame's hoard for herself and so barely honored the intent of his long-ago *wish*.

Flame was returned to the Prime Material plane stripped of all spell-casting powers and treasures. The angry dragon immediately took refuge in a nearby forest ruled by a group of kobolds. Most of the unfortunate kobolds were eaten quickly, but a few managed to keep their lives by promising to lead Flame to the greatest of treasures — "The Valley of Diamonds." Flame, always a greedy dragon, sensed a possible means of regaining favor with Tiamat and agreed to spare the lives of the knowledgeable kobolds.

The kobolds led Flame to the northern edge of the forest, where a secret pass entered the mountains. Continuing on through the snowy pass, Flame and his kobolds eventually arrived at the Ring of Flame, a group of small volcanic mountains which formed a rough circle. At the center of the Ring of Flame they found a huge collapsed volcanic crater filled with uncut diamonds. As soon as Flame touched the diamonds, he regained his spell-casting powers and several useful magical items (as gifts and encouragement from Tiamat).

While rolling around in the diamonds, Flame sighted a massive crystalline palace in the center of the crater. The building, shaped like a huge diamond, was magically suspended over a pool of lava and looked like frozen fire. Flame immediately smelled a wizard.

The evil mage of the palace, Opikus the Dark, was off adventuring when the inquisitive dragon entered the keep disguised as a traveling merchant, courtesy of his new *polymorph self* spell. Flame sent the remaining kobolds ahead of him, thereby managing to avoid all of the wizard's traps — although the kobolds were not so lucky. The dragon took up residence in the palace, and with his already extensive knowledge of spells and magical items, he managed to enter and adapt every part of the keep except one: a magical vault impervious to scrying, *teleportation*, Flame's spells (fourth level and lower), dragon fire, and brute force.

Flame was furious, for he had found numerous tomes describing the wondrous contents of the vault, including the description of a huge uncut diamond rumored to be valued at over a million gold pieces. Flame also discovered a *mirror of mental prowess* in the palace and learned its use, bringing in dozens of kobolds and keeping an eye on Opikus, lest he return unannounced.

After weeks of frustrated research into the vault by Flame (as even the *mirror* was unable to divine its secrets), the mage returned. Opikus was warned of the intruders in his home by the numerous broken doors and triggered traps, and he managed to blast dozens of kobolds sent into battle by Flame. The dragon then attacked the weakened mage, and before Flame realized what he was doing, he had stripped and eaten the roasted Opikus. Opikus's secret for opening the vault died with him.

A few of Opikus's magical items survived the dragon fire and were salvaged from the remains of the wizard, but such trifles did little to appease the enraged dragon. Flame wanted that treasure, and now there was nothing he could do about it — or was there? Flame remembered the group of adventurers who had recently killed him. They might be able to open the vault (thieves and wizards are specialists in that department). After they had done so, he could kill them and recover some of his previous hoard. "I will be twice as rich as ever before and have my long-awaited revenge as well," he mused.

With the aid of his new magical items (a *ring of wizardry* and the *mirror of mental prowess*), the wizard's research library, and Opikus's spell books, Flame formulated a devious plan. First he disguised himself as the "Mage-Merchant Opikus" so that he could fit through the *mirror*; then he brought the rest of the kobold force from the forest. While training them to defend the keep, he scried on as many of the adventurers who had defeated him as he could locate, often using his old treasure hoard items as markers and asking the *mirror* a question once every week. There is a fair chance that the PCs are aware of these observations, according to the Detection of Invisibility Table on page 60 of the *DMG*. The DM should find a way to integrate this possibility into adventures prior to running this one, if at all possible.

Flame took some of the diamonds for money and, again disguised as the merchant, traveled through the *mirror* to a realm he remembered well — the location of his old lair and the home of the adventurers. There he hired spies and bribed politicians, discovering all he needed to know about the famous dragon-slaying heroes. Flame was now prepared to commence his plan for ultimate revenge.

Linking the Two Adventures

If "Out of the Ashes" is being played as a follow-up to "Into the Fire," the heroes should gain a few levels between the adventures. This maintains the illusion that Flame is truly dead, and it gives Flame time to set his plan into motion.

Flame may have escaped the party during "Into the Fire." Even if the dragon wasn't slain, he would still desire revenge on the adventurers who tried to rob him and who remain alive to brag about their feat. The DM may also assume that Flame died of some other cause, such as a disease, after escaping from the adventurers, setting the above events into motion.

If the party has not played through "Into the Fire," Flame can learn of these adventurers through his spies. His natural draconic greed for the crystal palace's inaccessible treasure will then take the place of revenge as his motivation, and his personal history should be amended as the DM sees fit.

Starting the Adventure

Flame, disguised as the wealthy merchant and retired wizard Opikus, summons the party to an expensive inn in the city of Justiminium. He sends each of the PCs a scroll stating that the "famous dragon slayers and heroes of the realm are needed for a quest against great evil," signed with his assumed name.

If the adventurers research the name Opikus, they can find references to a strange wizard who disappeared some 20 years ago. The real Opikus was a very private wizard, preferring to hide his evil exploits and rarely allowing his existence to be known in the outside world. Any spells to gather information about either the real or counterfeit Opikus always fail, since the mage was protected from divination by his spells, and Flame is protected by his *amulet of proof against detection and location.* If the party has detected and captured one of Flame's spies, the agent can reveal only that he was hired by a mysterious merchant in Justiminium. Flame has taken great care to conceal his identity and intentions. (The actual character and use of such spies should be determined by the DM as appropriate for his campaign.)

When the PCs arrive for the meeting, the inn's security guards ask that all weapons and spell components be left at the door, and insist that all magic-users refrain from casting spells. The PCs are also warned that they will be passing through one or more secret *dispel magic* zones, and therefore all potions should be left behind as well. These measures are part of the extensive security precautions found at this inn, frequented by wealthy merchants who wish to keep their purses full and their business dealings private.

The adventurers are directed to an upper floor where they are greeted by "Opikus." When the PCs arrive at the meeting room, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

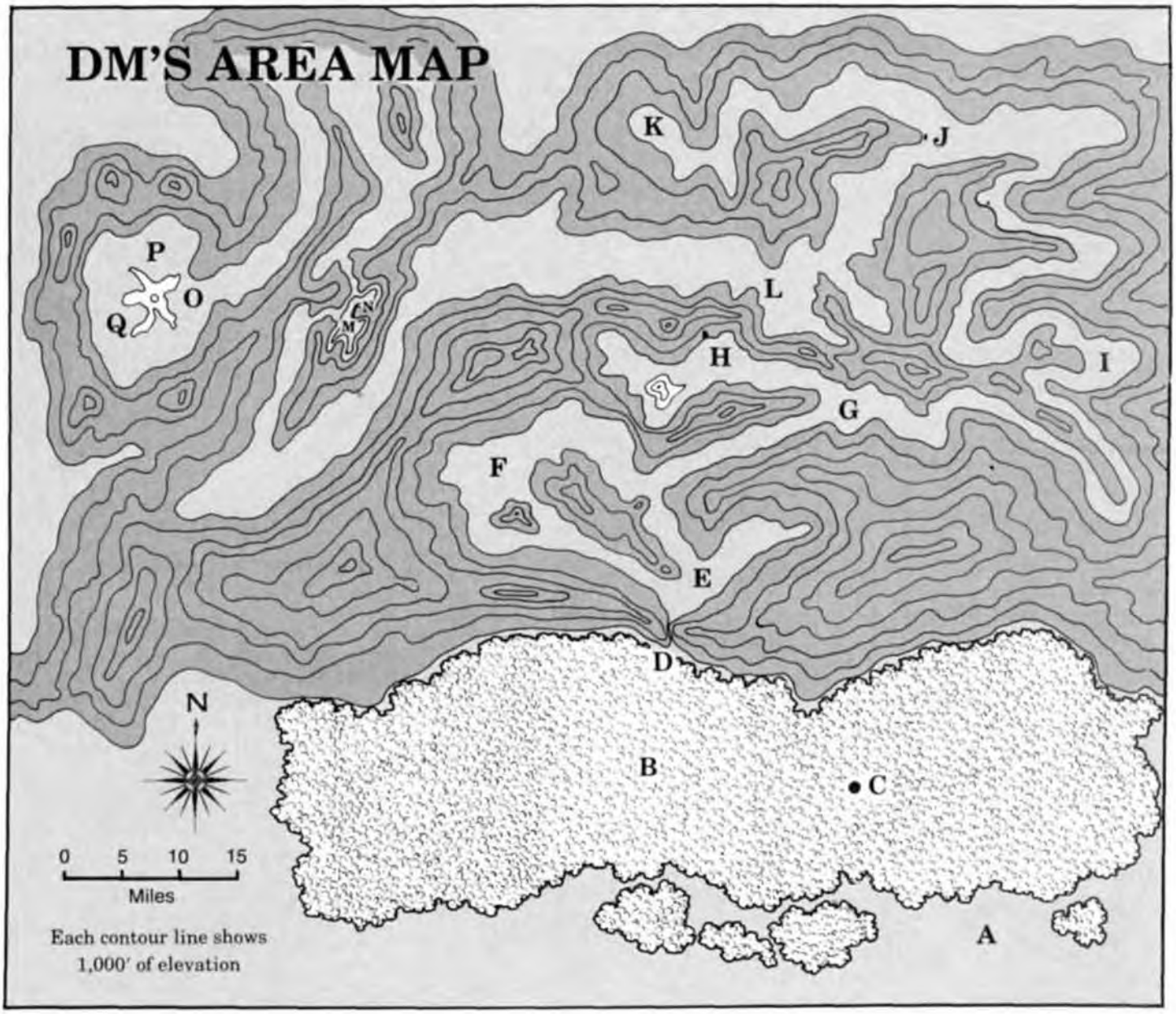
> You have entered a posh suite decorated with rich tapestries and oaken furnishings. A chess set stands in midplay on a huge table in the center of the room. At the head of the table sits an old man with long graying red hair, a full beard, and a bushy mustache. His black silk robes are embroidered in gold and silver, and a small red pouch hangs from a silver cord about his waist.
>
> "Greetings, travelers," he says. "Thank you for responding so quickly to my mysterious summons. Please sit down. I have a mission of utmost importance for you, with the most magnificent treasure awaiting at its completion.
>
> "I have heard of you — heard of you all through your deeds both famous and — shall we say — discreet? I have been watching you from afar for many weeks now; some of you might have noticed my little intrusions. I apologize for invading your privacy, but I hope you will soon agree that this scrying was necessary.
>
> "Sometimes heroes succeed by sheer luck or are not what they appear to be, taking credit for great deeds easily done, or noble deeds accomplished ignobly. Your hearty band is neither; you are all brave and committed to the causes of right and good. Because of these traits, you are the only heroes in the realm trustworthy enough to take care of . . . these."

The merchant pulls a book-sized mahogany case from under the table and places his finger lightly upon its silver clasp. Flicking it open, he slowly raises the lid, revealing another glasslike case within. Inside the glass case is a mummified hand, horribly blackened and shrivelled, apparently from a burned human corpse. Beside the gruesome remains is a small crimson agate about the size of an eyeball.

> "Yes, heroes. They are the real artifacts, the eye and hand of the arch-lich Vecna himself. Now you can understand the reason for my secrecy, eh? If even a lesser apprentice managed to get his hands, and eyes, on this case, he'd become the arch-lich incarnate and begin wreaking havoc on the entire civilized world. I have painstakingly proved their authenticity and have sealed them in this magical case, which only I know how to open.
>
> "Ah, so why do I need you? I have been tracking these hated artifacts down for many years now, and have lost my vitality and my youth on the incantations needed to locate these objects — and don't ask me what vile creatures and places I have had to contend with to recover them. Now I am too old and frail to finish my life's journey. I need you, as proven agents of good, to take these to the one place in all the multiverse where they can be destroyed once and for all."

"Opikus" now awaits the party's response. If the PCs accept the task immediately, read the text below. If they begin to ask questions, paraphrase the information below as necessary to maintain the deception.

> "To give you a fair sense of the dangers you will face and the enormity of your task, you must be told at least some of the centuries-long tale. Vecna died in the last great mage-war, many centuries ago, that killed or forced the permanent withdrawal of most of the first great sorcerers of the Prime Material plane. This glorious battle was fought near the legendary Ring of Flame, a great circle of fire ripped from the very bowels of the planet.
>
> "When Vecna fell beneath a hail of swords and sorcery, his corpse was flung into the great pool of lava at the very heart of the Ring of Flame's huge central crater. Legend has it that the ground heaved in disgust as it was forced to eat the horrid remains, and the ensuing eruption obliterated all of the remaining victorious forces.
>
> "But in the chaos, one of Vecna's minions escaped with the eye and hand you see before you. The history of these artifacts since then is centuries long and equally interesting, but not important now that they have been recovered.
>
> "I have discovered a map which reveals a secret pass purporting to lead to this legendary Ring of Flame. I have brought you here, to this city, because this mystical pass lies in the mountains to the very north of us, shielded by the dark and ancient forest of Nograheim.
>
> "To help you avoid temptation and the intensely evil influence of these artifacts, I alone will retain the secret of their protective case. For your own safety, and the safety of those around you, do not even try to open it. Be assured that the molten fires of the Ring of Flame will consume the case as well as the accursed artifacts held within.
>
> "Now, you might say that the honor of destroying such evil items is reward enough, and you would be right. But the gods smiled on the destruction of Vecna and will smile again when the job is finally completed. Legend has it that the volcano's ancient eruption also brought forth a fountain of diamonds, formed deep beneath the earth, which rained down upon the great valley and bejewelled it in a



dusky coat. The greatest of these diamonds was rumored to be of tremendous size, perhaps worth as much as a million pieces of gold, once cut. I believe that such a stone is worthy compensation for this noble cause. What say you?"

"Opikus" will give the party time to think over the proposition. When the PCs are ready to proceed, he hands them a sketchily drawn map and the mahogany chest, saying:

"Beware. I have kept this secret between ourselves and as few beings as possible, but the forces of evil are clever and ruthless, and the Ring of Flame is strong with magical and elemental forces. I will try to observe your journey as often as possible, and I will send as much assistance as I can, limited though it may be. Trust no one but yourselves and me."

If the party attacks "Opikus" for any reason, he rushes into a nearby closet, the location upon which his *mirror of mental prowess* is currently fixed. Once the PCs leave on their mission, he returns to his palace this same way.

Opikus/Flame (*polymorphed* dragon): MV 12"; #AT nil (unarmed); other statistics as for dragon form (see page 63).

The mahogany case can be opened only with the passwords "Wizard's Hoard" and was built by the real Opikus, a 23rd-level Arch-Mage. It is protected from all physical force and magic with *wish* spells, and it was formerly used to carry some of Opikus's most treasured posses-

sions. The PCs should not be able to open the case, but if they should somehow manage to do so, they might (after attempting to wield or damage them) find that the artifacts are not what they are supposed to be. The hand is from one of Flame's unfinished meals, and the agate is worth 5,000 gp. Neither radiates magic (it is rumored that real artifacts don't radiate magic), and divination spells other than *legend lore* reveal nothing, either (again, artifacts are said to be shielded from divination spells and scrying by their makers). However, *legend lore, limited wish, wish,* and the like will reveal these items for what they are.

Any extensive effort to verify Flame's tale of Vecna meets with success. The real Opikus was obsessed with locating the genuine artifacts and had an entire wall of his library dedicated to books and scrolls on the subject of Vecna. Flame got the idea for this elaborate ruse by reading these books.

At the DM's option, a rumor about the "curse of Vecna" can be planted, describing the terrible fates that have befallen some of the previous owners of these artifacts. The DM might replace the nonmagical agate with a *stone of weight* (loadstone) to fulfill the curse's predictions. The "curse" is lifted by dropping the case into the molten fissures at the Ring of Flame (see area Q). In any case, the DM should always make the PC carrying the artifacts very nervous about doing so, perhaps through evil visions and nightmares brought on by the tale told above.

Encounter Key

A. Justiminium. Justiminium is an adventurer's city. The forest to the west (area B) and the mountains to the north contain virtually unlimited monsters and treasure for those brave enough to seek them. Because of this, mercenaries are in high demand, and adventurers are frequently seen exchanging rare objects, pelts, beasts, and other treasures for more transportable currencies like gold, platinum, and gems.

Justiminium is also a haven for merchants, as the city is open to all and is able to keep tariffs and taxes low because of the vast amounts of wealth that pass through here. The abundance of wealth also attracts many thieves, and the thieves' guild is among the town's richest, making more money by selling "protection" than they could possibly attain by more dishonest methods. More than one thief has arrived at the city gates a mere beggar and left a "respectable" noble, complete with a forged family history and coat of arms.

The party begins the adventure here and should have no trouble purchasing normal adventuring goods. The wide assortment of craftsmen can even provide special adventuring goods (rare spell components, silvered and exotic weapons, scrolls and potions, etc.). However, even simple magical items sell for at least twice the *DMG* value, since the numbers of wealthy traders, adventurers, and collectors insure that there will always be a healthy market for any available magical item. Likewise, any treasure the party recovers during the adventure can immediately be sold at *DMG* value, with auctions and skillful negotiating often bringing in much higher prices.

B. Nograheim. The dwarves long ago named this deep, dark forest Nograheim, or "Land of Beasts." The immense size of the forest makes it impossible to conquer completely, and all attempts to civilize it over the years have failed miserably. The Justiminium council, comprised mostly of merchants, decided long ago to declare the forest a "monster refuge," the only one of its kind in the world. Since the merchant trains stay clear of its borders, and Justiminium is heavily fortified (both structurally and magically), the monsters within mostly fight among themselves, exploiting the mines and cities abandoned by many races over the centuries.

Numerous posted warnings along Nograheim's borders warn adventurers not to "eliminate any cultures (no matter how evil), clear entire sections of the forest, or set up permanent fortifications within the forest," by order of the Justiminium Town Council (which by decree of the local Duke has sole responsibility for the handling of Nograheim).

While Nograheim is technically protected by this order, no member of the town council would dare think of prohibiting those foolish enough to brave the forest's evil depths the opportunity to bring back even more wealth to fill the city's coffers (and therefore the councilmen's pockets as well). Officially, no one is prohibited from traveling within the forest, and therefore it sometimes becomes necessary to "defend oneself" in such a dangerous place. The few poachers who make a living hunting on the fringes of the forest always take care to contrive elaborate tales of their perils and how they happened to be passing Nograheim. The PCs, new to this region, might find themselves in deep trouble should they return bragging about successfully hunting down any beasts within the forest. If the PCs pay a small bribe (about 10% of the experience-point value of the creature in gold), they'll be let off with a warning and told to concoct a suitable (but not necessarily believable) story about their next kill.

The DM is encouraged to throw some of his nastiest forest beasts into this region, but to avoid ultrapowerful beasts (ancient dragons especially) and intelligent civilizations (like drow elves). This forest should make the party very glad to have a map to the secret pass (area D) instead of having to find it by wandering around.

The PCs might think they're being smart by trying to follow the edge of the mountains to the secret pass instead of journeying through the greater part of the forest. While this route might appear shorter initially, the PCs will find instead that the forest is twice as dark and dense near the bottom of the mountain slopes, where water from the melting snow first enters the forest. Therefore, the movement rate is halved and encounter frequency is doubled along the base of these mountains.

The dense forest is treated like jungle terrain, meaning that horses cannot be ridden at any rate better than walking. The recommended rate of travel within Nograheim, barring rest stops and encounters, is 10 miles per day.

The DM can refer to the random monster tables for temperate wilderness forests in the *DMG* (pages 184-186) and *Monster Manual II* (page 146) for suggestions on how to populate the Land of Beasts. Encounters occur on a roll of 1 on 1d6, checked every four hours. None of the forest creatures have seen Flame (in either guise) and lived to tell about it. In any case, the DM should make sure that Nograheim is so dangerous that the party escapes its borders with a sense that "only adventurers of our caliber could have survived that forest."

C. Kobold Camp. If the PCs take a long way through the forest or somehow get lost, they might stumble across the crumbling ruins of this huge kobold lair. The kobolds once maintained a large

territory within the forest, having only to worry about the occasional hill giant out for sport or a wandering basilisk. This camp, however, was obliterated by Flame many months ago, and the remaining kobolds either fled to the depths of the forest (where they were promptly slain) or were forced to join Flame at his crystal palace.

Flame took all the remaining male kobolds for labor and mercenaries, and the women and children for breeding and late-night snacks. Since the original battle with Flame was cleaned up by the kobolds, and the dragon was extra cautious when he brought the rest of the camp along, there are no dragon tracks to suggest Flame's presence here. However, there are a number of scorched regions, and the tracks of one unarmored human male (Flame in merchant disguise) can be discerned by a skilled tracker (ranger, barbarian, or adventurer with tracking proficiency) at –30% on the roll. The party might conclude that a wizard attacked the camp and the kobolds have since evacuated the region. There is no treasure remaining in the camp.

D. The Living Pass. The walls of this pass are seemingly alive with animated magical frescoes. The western wall (reading south to north) depicts the story of the forces of good gathering and heading toward the Ring of Flame (area O), ending with the death of Vecna and his cremation.

To the east, reading north to south, is the tale of the forces of evil and their ultimate triumph over the slayers of Vecna. The last scene depicts a nameless minion of Vecna stealing away with a small bundle of the arch-lich's remains.

The frescoes are actually permanent *programmed illusions* cast at the 30th level of ability. It would take years to dispel all of the panels. It is unclear who or what placed them here, as none of the sorcerers portrayed are supposed to have survived the cataclysm. The frescoes can be generally attributed to the highly magical nature of this region and its legendary ties to the various elemental regions and their rulers.

Nothing about the pass itself keeps the monsters of Nograheim from passing beyond the frescoes. However, those creatures of low intelligence fear the "untouchables" (the magical illusions), and the smarter monsters avoid the cold mountains, preferring not to take risks with the unknown. If the PCs are fleeing from any beast from Nograheim when they reach the pass, the monster must make a successful intelligence check to pursue farther, modified by the specific circumstances of the encounter.

E. The Mountain Pass. Since most of this great pass is an ancient riverbed (formed when the world was warmer at this latitude), movement in the pass is relatively unrestricted. Recommended movement rates are 20 miles per day on horseback and 15 miles per day afoot.

As with the forest of Nograheim, the DM is encouraged to flesh out these mountains before play begins, provided any changes remain within the guidelines and spirit of the adventure. Use the charts for subarctic wilderness mountain encounters found in the *DMG* (page 184) and *Monster Manual II* (pages 141-142), checking every eight hours. An encounter occurs on a roll of 1 on 1d8. As before, no creatures encountered here have any knowledge of Flame or his mission.

Since the party is supposed to believe that the hazards of Nograheim and these mountains are the true tests of their power and the sole guards of the Ring of Flame, the DM should turn these otherwise preliminary encounters into adventures unto themselves. If the party arrives too quickly at the Ring of Flame, the destruction of the "artifacts" will seem too easy and therefore suspicious.

The cold mountain pass contains many magical gates to the elemental planes, and the DM may wish to consider these factors when populating the realm with monsters. Some beasts the DM might consider using are frost men, basilisks, elementals, efreeti, xorn, rocs, wooly mammoths, storopers, trolls, and will-o-wisps. Of course, the DM is not limited by these suggestions.

One final note: Flame will be observing the party as often as possible, using his *mirror of mental prowess* from the safety of the Crystal Citadel. Ironically, this should make the PCs feel more comfortable about their surroundings (if they detect the scrying), as they should believe that they are being watched over by their benefactor, the wizard-merchant Opikus. Should the PCs get into dire straits while Flame is observing them, there is a chance the dragon will intercede on their behalf. Since Flame only wants to weaken the PCs during their long trek toward the magical vault he wants opened so badly, it does him little good to see them slaughtered wholesale before they even reach the palace.

Taking note of Flame's spells and magical items (see area 28) and his overall goal in the adventure, the DM must decide when, where, and how Flame (as Opikus) makes his moves. If the PCs are irrevocably slain before they accomplish their mission, Flame will kill off their enemies and recover as many of the party's items and treasures as possible. If he is still unable to open the magical vault with the aid of this new-found magic, he will begin his plans anew with a fresh party of adventurers.

F. Hot Springs. This area is a beautiful plain littered with magnificent geysers and hot springs. There are no indigenous monsters here, but the PCs should avoid falling into or exploring the largest geyser hole as it serves as a gateway to the elemental plane of Water. Refer to the *Manual of the Planes* for more on elemental gates.

G. Ambush! At this narrow section where two passes come together, a group of frost giants has prepared an ambush. Shegor the Strong and his band have been hunting in this area of the mountains for years, but were partying heavily at area H when Flame and the kobolds passed through. Since Shegor and Gerk, his pet white dragon, are watching the pass from high in the mountains, they automatically see and surprise the party unless the PCs are completely invisible or have taken similar precautions. If for some reason the PCs are not surprised, modify the effects of the ambush as necessary.

The ambush, which the giants have used dozens of times on the many creatures wandering these mountains, is laid out as follows:

The attack takes place just as the party arrives at the point in the mountains where the two passes meet. Shegor sits astride Gerk (which means "stupid" in the frost-giant tongue), high on the western cliffs, concealed in the snow drifts. On either side of the eastern pass, five giants (10 frost giants total) are dug into the snow, armed with 10 throwing boulders each. While entrenched and popping up and down, the giants are afforded 75% cover (granting –7 to their armor classes vs. missile fire, per the *DMG*, page 64).

Just as the PCs pass between the con-

cealed giants, Shegor and Gerk take off from the cliffs and swoop down behind them. The giant and his mount attempt to glide in quietly (increasing their chances for surprise to 1-4 on 1d6), but there is a 25% chance that Gerk will forget his instructions and roar loudly (lowering surprise to 1 on 1d12). As the attackers pass over the party, Shegor drops a boulder on any party member who appears to have a missile weapon (a wizard is also a good target), while Gerk breathes once over the entire group (or as many of the PCs as possible). Gerk will not attack with claw or fang, preferring to remain out of melee range for now.

If the PCs immediately begin launching missile fire or spells at Gerk and Shegor, or the PCs spread out too quickly, the other giants hurl boulders at them. Otherwise, the giants wait until Gerk and Shegor have completed a second pass.

Shegor the Strong, male frost giant lord: AC 4; MV 12"; HD 10+4; hp 84; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA hurl rocks for 2-20 hp; SD impervious to cold; AL CE; MM1/44; huge *hammer +1* (Dmg 5-30 +1), potion of *extra-healing.* Shegor was always the strongest in his clan. Now fully grown, he is as strong as the average fire giant. He prefers a wandering existence, at least until he finds some giant women.

Gerk (the "Stupid"), huge male ancient white dragon: AC 3; MV 12"/30"; HD 7; hp 56; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/2-16; SA frost breath weapon; AL CE; MM1/34. Gerk can't speak, can't cast spells, and has very low intelligence. He can understand simple hand signals and knows that a slap on the back means "breathe on the suckers." For some strange reason, Gerk is an exceptional flyer, for a dragon, and has a maneuverability class of D.

When Shegor found him, Gerk was nearly fully grown but very lonely. Shegor attacked Gerk with his bare hands (a sign of strength for frost giants, since they are immune to white-dragon breath weapons), and Gerk enjoyed the rough play very much. Gerk rolled onto his back laughing so hard that Shegor assumed he had subdued the dragon. Shegor brought Gerk back with him as his new mount and has regretted the decision ever since.

Male frost giants (10): AC 4; MV 12"; HD 10+2; hp 70 each; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA hurl rocks for 2-20 hp; SD impervious to cold; AL CE; MM1/44; huge axes (4-24 hp).

These giants think that the noisy Gerk is going to get them all killed one of these days, and would rather have some hearty giant women along instead. The giants aren't carrying any treasure so that they can transport as much as possible back to their camp (area H) after they've killed the adventurers.

H. Frost Giant Treasure Cave. Piles of boulders mark the large cavern here as the frost giants' lair (see area G). There are 11 piles of furs and miscellaneous giant possessions. A potion of *flying* and a *manual of gainful exercise* (written in elvish) are hidden beneath the largest pile of furs.

Inside a snow-covered pit near the rear of the cave are 4,935 ep, 443 pp, six emeralds worth 1,000 gp each, and a golden jewelry set — a ring (500 gp), gold necklace (2,000 gp), scepter (5,000 gp), and a crown (4,000 gp). Next to the pit is a pile of dragon scales and animal bones. Scattered amid the debris are 2,121 gp and a suit of elven *chain mail +2.*

I. Avalanche! The snow pack on the mountain to the east of this point has warmed slightly and is very close to falling. An avalanche is 75% likely to occur should the party make any loud noises or cast any violent spells. Refer to the *Wilderness Survival Guide,* pages 80-82, for rules on avalanches.

J. Good Spirits. A smooth black stone monolith 30' high and 10' square at the base stands at this branch in the pass. The imprint of a human hand engraved on the monolith some 10' above the ground is its only decoration.

The monolith was placed here centuries before Vecna's fall, as a marker to future travelers. The monolith, although it fails to radiate magic, does have one special property. If any good-aligned being touches the monolith with an open, bare palm, a female djinni named Aradullah appears.

Aradullah: AC 4; MV 9"/24"; HD 7+3; hp 50; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SA whirlwind; SD spell-like powers; AL CG; MM1/28.

Aradullah is dressed in flowing, emerald green silk, and her only possession is a huge silver goblet filled with shimmering ruby-red wine. She has been commanded to help good travelers only, but the type of help to be given is left solely up to her.

In this case, Aradullah warns the party, "Beware the sign of the dragon." Other than the disguised reference to Flame, the significance of her message is explained further at area L. If any PC possesses a *ring of air elemental command* or *djinni summoning,* Aradullah offers him a drink from her goblet. By drinking, the PC in question is imparted with the knowledge that the pass to the right is a trap (although the nature of the trap is not revealed). The DM may also allow a drink from Aradullah's goblet if the party offers her a particularly beautiful item of jewelry or gems (10,000 gp worth is recommended). Aradullah will under no circumstances join the party and quickly returns to her home on the elemental plane of Air.

K. Bulette Holes. This dead end has become the haven for 10 bulettes. The ice pack is literally filled with their tunnels.

Bulettes (10): AC -2/4/6; MV 14" (3"); HD 9; hp 72 (x3), 65 (x2), 64 (x4), 60; #AT 3; Dmg 4-48/3-18/3-18; SA 8' jump with four attacks; AL N; MM1/13.

The bulettes remain beneath the snow while the party moves farther and farther into the canyon. For every round the party spends walking in this area, there is a 20% chance that the ice below the group is unsound enough to collapse. Falling PCs take only 2-12 hp damage but are immediately attacked by one or more bulettes while their comrades try to pull them out. Once the first PC falls in, any bulettes not engaged in the tunnels begin circling toward the party, rising and falling in the snow only to disappear from view moments before leaping into the air for the attack. Since the bulettes are smart enough to vary their direction of approach during an attack, they retain normal chances for surprise.

The "snow sharks" have no treasure, and there is nothing of interest to the party here.

L. The Sign of the Dragon. Another monolith, identical in shape and construction to the one at area J, stands near the western wall of the pass. On it is engraved a symbol that resembles a stylized dragon:

Aradullah's message (see area J) warned the party of Flame's presence and his ultimate location within the pass: the shape of the pass from area L to area Q is roughly the shape of the sign on the monolith, although only a party that maps the pass accurately will realize this. She also warned about the monolith itself.

For both chaotic and devious reasons, Flame has placed a *magic mouth* spell on this monolith. Anyone who comes within 20' of the monolith causes the *magic mouth* to yell "You're getting hotter!" This message awakens an ancient, 50'-long remorhaz that lies sleeping beneath the ice near the base of the monolith. The remorhaz begins to melt the ice above him by turning on his spinal heaters. Anyone standing in an area 30' deep by 70' wide, starting 10' away from the front of the monolith immediately falls through the melting ice and onto the molten back of the remorhaz, taking 3-18 hp damage from the fall and 10-100 hp damage from the remorhaz's heat. Also, all normal items carried are immediately incinerated (no saving throw); magical items get a saving throw vs. magical fire to avoid being destroyed (see *DMG*, page 80).

Remorhaz: AC 0/2/4; MV 12"; HD 16; hp 122; #AT 1; Dmg 8-48; SA swallows whole on a roll of 18 or better; SD gives off extreme heat, destroys weapons; AL N; MM1/82.

Beneath this specimen of unheard of size and strength lies his treasure hoard. It contains 12,000 sp worth of pure silver ore, 160 pp in a broken chest, a pair of *wings of flying* ("Vladimir" is the command word), a potion of *reptile/amphibian/fish control* (double strength), and a scroll of *protection from gaze weapons.*

M. The Strange Lake. This mineral-filled freshwater lake has a number of unique properties. First, it refuses to freeze, even though the water temperature is well below the freezing point. Also, any nonmagical creature who dwells within the soothing waters or drinks from them regularly for at least a month slowly begins to increase in size as if affected by a potion of *animal growth.* This effect, however, lasts for only one day after the creature leaves the area. The lake appeared during the great cataclysm described at area O. The fish and mystical water came directly from the elemental plane of Water, where huge water beasts are not uncommon.

The lake once teemed with hundreds of huge animals and fish, but some of the more aggressive predators have since taken over. Three gargantuan octopi rule the lower depths of the lake. The mated pair and Junior spend most of their time sleeping and permit the other fish to breed enough (by not slaughtering them wholesale) to provide suitable "sacrifices" for the octopi's meals. If the PCs pass along the lake's edge quietly, they will be safe from attack. However, if the party attracts the wrath of any of the other creatures in the lake (see area N) or enters the water to explore, the octopi will awaken. If aroused, the octopi wait until the party camps or enters the water, if possible. If the party refuses to oblige, the octopi crawl up the beach and attack from behind.

Gargantuan octopi (3): AC 7; MV 3"//12"; HD 16; hp 118, 106, 70; #AT 7; Dmg 2-8 (x6)/4-24; SA constriction; SD ink cloud; AL NE; see MM1/75 for half-size version.

The lair of the octopi is located at the very bottom of the lake, about 500' below the surface. Inside are 24 rough gems (each worth 500 gp) and a *hat of invisibility* (works like a *ring of invisibility*). The rest of the lake's depths are filled with giant but harmless fish.

Flame decided to leave these creatures alone, hoping that the party would waste precious potions, scrolls, item charges, and spells here. After he has dealt with the adventurers, Flame plans to dine regularly at this lake. He acquired a taste for seafood at his old lake haven (see "Into the Fire").

N. Attack of the Gigantic Crabs. A peninsula in the center of the lake is home to 100 gargantuan crabs. Usually, the crabs bury themselves in the soft sands around the edge of the island, so they are impossible to detect without magic (a *wand of enemy detection*, etc.). Since this is the only area in the lake that the octopi (area M) don't directly control, the normally peaceful crabs are very protective of it.

Gargantuan crabs (100): AC 3; MV 9"; HD 6; hp 36 each; #AT 2; Dmg 4-16/4-16; SA surprise 1-4 on 1d6; AL N; see MM1/15 for half-size version.

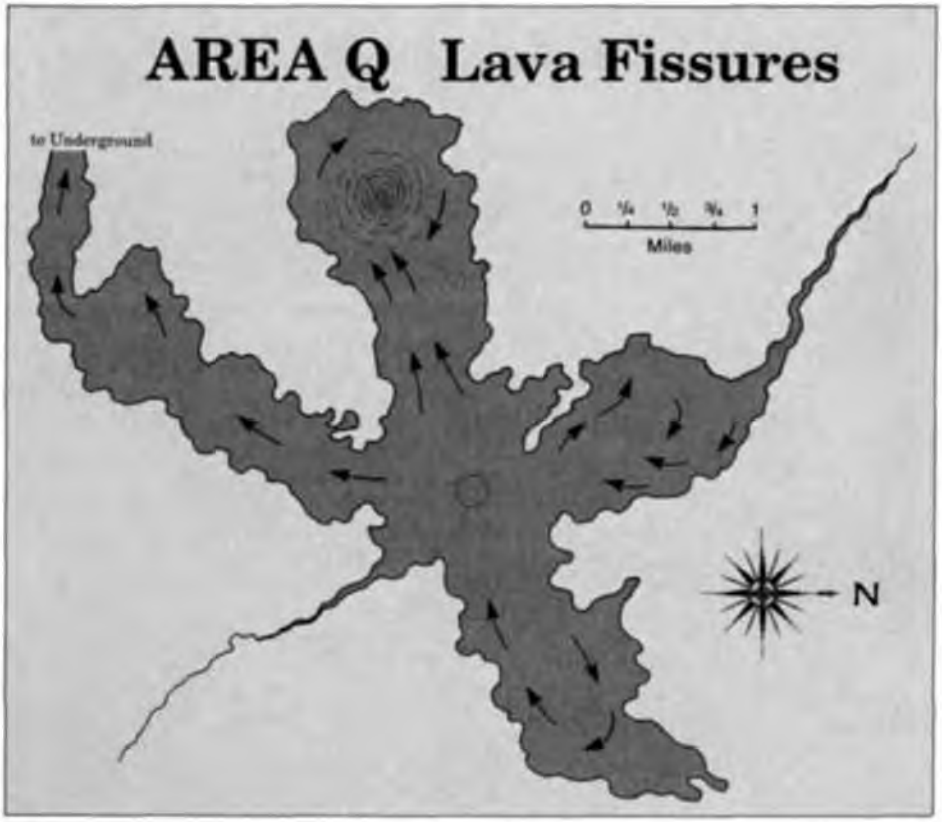
If the PCs walk along the beach or make any noise within 50', the sleeping crabs awaken in 2-8 rounds. The PCs can choose to fight, move to higher ground, or flee the lake entirely. The crabs fight to the last to defend their island, and

they can move faster up the rocky island slopes than the party can, so fleeing adventurers are subject to back attacks (+2 to hit) all the way up. However, the crabs will not pursue more than 250' up the slope, and the PCs can rest in the cave they find near the top of the hill (at least for a few moments). The crabs keep a close watch from the beach, just waiting for the party to make a break for it.

If the party arouses the crabs, the octopi will also be alerted. If the PCs then decide to flee the island, they will find themselves surrounded on the thin natural causeway by gigantic octopi in the water and gargantuan crabs from behind.

Some 250' up the island slopes, there is an icy cave which appears safe from outside. However, there is actually a dormant purple worm within the tunnel. PCs who proceed farther in than 30' notice strange rock formations ringing the tunnel. Without warning, the cave entrance (actually the mouth of the worm) closes behind the party, shutting off all light from outside.

Purple worm: AC 6; MV 9"; HD 15; hp 120; #AT 2; Dmg 2-24/2-8; SA swallow whole; AL N; MM1/80.



The fish, the purple worm, and the crabs have no treasure — the octopi have taken it all. The DM should remember that the octopi are not restricted to the water areas of the lake, although they do move faster there.

O. The Ring of Flame. Long ago, five minor volcanoes encircled one huge volcano in a geological formation known as the Ring of Flame. This region was strong with elemental powers and attracted the attention of powerful wizards as well as demigods of the Prime Material plane.

When the arch-lich Vecna was thrown into the fires of the great central volcano by the mortal forces of good, the immortal forces of evil took revenge by sending the entire region into flame. The elemental prince of Earth, Ogremoch, channeled huge quantities of magma and earths from the elemental planes to the Prime Material plane, and the mighty interplanar eruption blew away the top of the massive volcano and left a gaping crater in its place. The outer planar forces of good, having little control over the elemental realms, watched in dismay as the brave slayers of Vecna were consumed in the holocaust.

But the gods of good were not so easily chagrined. The gods of evil, led by Ogremoch, quickly discovered that entire veins of their hoarded precious metals, gems, and rare earths had "mistakenly" gone up with the eruption of the Ring of Flame. At the last moment, the gods of good, unable to directly counter an elemental god's invocation, had used their powers to shift the location of Ogremoch's elemental warp. The lost hoard included the rarest of treasures, a huge uncut diamond worth perhaps a million gold pieces or more. Good had made Evil pay dearly for its vengeance.

Because of the unique nature of Ogremoch's planar warp, the elemental prince could regain his lost treasures only if someone on the Prime Material plane summoned him there or mined the huge quantities of earth and metal and sacrificed them appropriately. And Ogremoch was well aware that he would have to perform great services unless the mortal bargainer was a complete fool.

Enter Opikus, a modern-day disciple of Vecna and world expert on the catastrophe and Vecna's fabled hand and eye (rescued by a believer just before the cataclysm). Finally locating the mysterious Ring of Flame, Opikus set up a temporary keep and began preparations for the ultimate test of his sorcerous powers, the building of the Crystal Citadel. Having learned the secrets of the volcano and Vecna's demise, Opikus began extracting favors from Ogremoch and the other elemental princes in exchange for a small fraction of the lost hoard of precious metals and rare earths. (For more on the nature and construction of Opikus's palace, see "The Crystal Citadel.")

When his palace was finally completed, Opikus moved all of his belongings within and continued his research on Vecna's legacy. He was just returning from a venture involving the possibility of contacting the arch-lich's eternally damned soul when he wandered into a group of kamikaze kobolds and their red dragon master, Flame, with fatal results.

P. The Valley of Diamonds. As any dwarf can attest, the best soils, gems, and metals come from deep below the earth. In this region, volcanic and interplanar activity have brought forth a plenitude of such treasures from deep within the ground and even from the elemental plane of Earth.

The valley is literally littered with diamonds. Although most are of only fair quality and are good only for diamond dust spell components, one in a thousand can be turned into a beautiful and valuable jewel. The DM should use the random generation tables to determine the quality of the gems when found and subsequent value upon cutting (see the *DMG*, pages 25-26).

Since most of the diamonds have layer upon layer of carbon soot coating them, they look more like little chunks of charcoal or fused quartz than diamonds. Any magic-user who regularly uses spells that require diamonds (e.g., *wall of force*) or a PC with the nonweapon proficiencies of jeweler, gem cutter, jewelry or gem appraising, or mining will have no trouble determining which rocks are authentic and which are the most valuable. Transporting the rocks and finding suitable gem cutters is another story.

Dozens of veins of metals like gold and silver (and even a mithral shaft or two) run within the cliffs and rock strata nearby. The mining task is enormous but highly profitable, although the proximity of the volcanoes and lava beds make the already shaky prospect of mining here even riskier.

When Flame arrived here, Tiamat rewarded him by returning his spells and magical items. She believes that if Flame dies of old age within the valley, she can take all of the diamonds (including the huge one) as her sacrifice. She can then use this new-found wealth to buy the loyalty of more minions and perhaps fashion a gem-topped staff to rival the powerful scepter of Asmodeus. Flame doesn't care about Tiamat's aspirations. All he desires is to sit on Tiamat's court of dragons (and thereby receive all the pleasures and fringe benefits a retired dragon could ever dream of, including unlimited "snack-elves"). Flame has already begun his new hoard and has hauled piles of diamonds into the keep (see area 24).

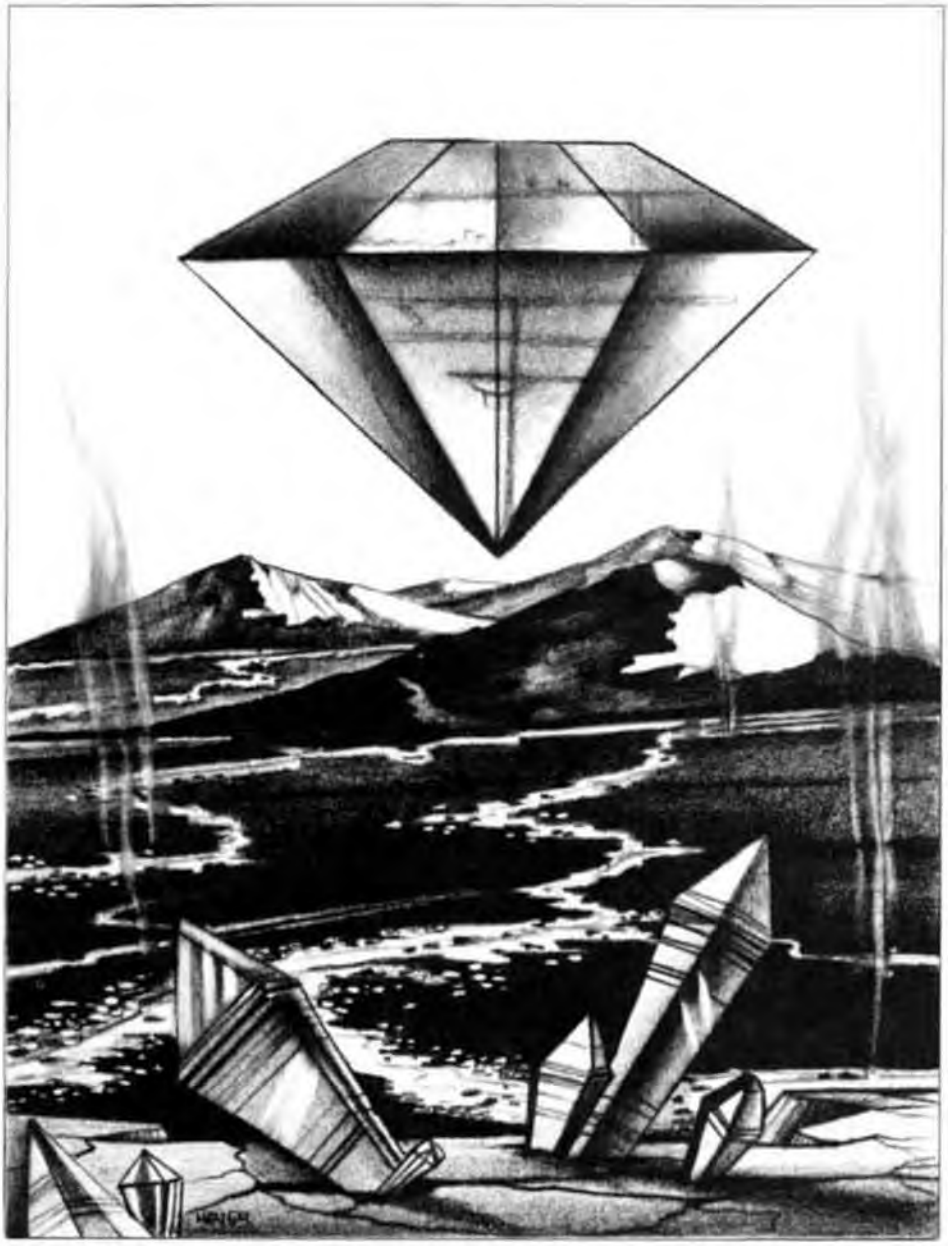
Q. The Fissures of Flame. These great rents in the earth are indeed where Vecna met his end. The great lava whirlpool in the western branch of the five fissures is a gate to the elemental plane of Fire, the only place where the true *eye* and *hand of Vecna* can be destroyed.

Unfortunately for the PCs, they don't actually possess these items, merely facsimiles. Therefore, it doesn't matter whether the PCs drop the case and its contents in now or wait until after they've explored the huge crystal citadel floating nearby. For the sake of the ruse, however, the DM should make a relatively "big show" when the party does dump them in. The DM can inform the adventurers that a wave of ease and calm sweeps over them as the fires consume the box. Naturally, the PCs should feel easier when their responsibilities and worries about the "evil artifacts" are gone, especially if the DM replaced the agate with a *loadstone*, as suggested earlier.

The lava is continually rising from below (near the center of the fissures) and circulating around to eventually sink again through tunnels in the southwestern crevasse or through the western whirlpool. The lava radiates neither magic nor evil.

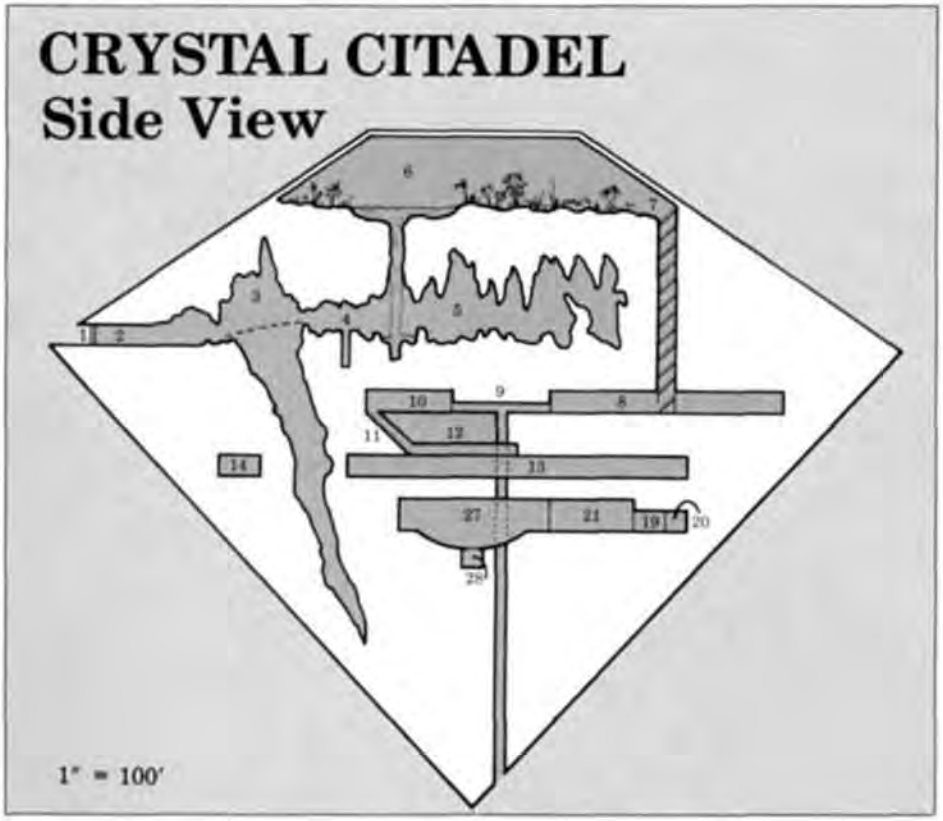
The Crystal Citadel

When Flame first gazed upon the huge gleaming jewel above the lava fissures, he called it the Palace of Frozen Fire. He could see structures within the slowly turning keep, but the play of the lava light throughout made it impossible to tell more about the contents of the mysterious palace. A wizard of great power was undoubtedly involved, and Flame decided that he would either slay the owner of the "great gem" or offer to be his partner (and then slay him).



Flame is now using the citadel as bait to force the adventurers to open the vault which, according to Opikus's diaries, contains the huge diamond and other treasures. Flame has correctly guessed that the diamond is the spell component that actually keeps the palace afloat and magically protected. If it is removed, the entire citadel and those within are doomed (see area 28). Although this places the entire keep in danger should the party succeed in opening the vault, Flame doesn't intend to let the PCs get possession of the diamond.

A monstrous hunk of quartz was brought here by Opikus through a bargain with Ogremoch, prince of the elemental plane of Earth. The quartz was flawed and uncut though, and Opikus was forced to sacrifice even more treasure to obtain the services of the crysmals (area 5C) to properly shape the rock into the magnificent citadel it is today. Later, air elementals were summoned to haul the block into place while the



proper enchantments were laid upon the great diamond at its heart. The huge diamond serves as the spell component, or magical power source, for the various enchantments laid upon the keep.

The citadel is suspended in midair 300' above the lava pool and rotates slowly about its vertical axis (clockwise as viewed from above). Fifteen degrees of arc go by for every minute that passes, meaning that the structure takes 24 minutes to complete one full rotation.

All inner and outer walls of the palace are protected by permanent *walls of force.* In places like the emerald doors (area 1), the magical *walls* remain attached to the surfaces of the doors when they are opened or closed. The huge diamond also powers many permanent antidetection spells which render any attempts at divination, scrying, etherealness, or stone-affecting spells (e.g., *stone shape, passwall, stone tell,* etc.) useless, except for the use of the *mirror of mental prowess* in the keep. If the diamond is removed from the vault (area 28), these protections cease operating. The walls can then be affected like normal quartz, and the keep stops spinning — and falls into the lava. The PCs can *teleport* out while the castle melts beneath the lava's surface if they have the proper spells. For more on these events, see area 28 and "Concluding the Adventure."

From outside, the keep appears to be a perfectly cut gigantic diamond, slowly refracting the sunlight (or moonlight) and alive with the burning lava light from below. It is obvious that the inside is not completely hollow, and indeed major flaws are visible, but the depth of the refraction and the constant motion of the citadel make it impossible to discern all but the most obvious of characteristics within the huge crystal keep.

The cut crystal itself is a huge block of quartz 700' high and 800' wide at its widest point. It could only have been grown or mined in another plane. The citadel is completely detailed herein, but plenty of space has been left within the keep for ambitious DMs to add as many additional ideas as they desire. Also, space constraints prohibit a complete listing of the minor furnishings found in each chamber (especially the living quarters and laboratories), so the DM should use the table of magic-user furnishings found in the *DMG,* page 218, to add to the atmosphere.

There are no random encounters within the crystal citadel, although there are plenty of planned ones. Unless otherwise mentioned, there is no interior illumination, but the walls within the keep are clear enough to allow light to enter from the outside. During the day, the palace is brilliantly lit by the sun, and at night the lava pool below casts an eerie glow throughout the citadel (Opikus would wear a necklace with a *continual light* spell cast on it in order to see clearly at night).

The castle's rotation is hardly noticeable from within, since there are no reference points visible on the outside. Adventurers who stop and relax, though, will notice the pull of the centrifugal forces.

The Kamikaze Kobold Corps

Before they encountered one mean red dragon, these little kobold savages controlled an entire region of Nograheim Forest (area B). They had become so nasty and vicious, it soon became a great and brave test for a hill giant to hunt down, kill, and return with as many of the little kobolds as possible. To the kobolds' credit, there are very few kobold feet on the walls of hill-giant huts.

The kobolds still fly their own banner, "the busted knee cap," but are now in the employ of Flame. The dragon has threatened to burn their women and children if they don't kill the party of adventurers now approaching the citadel. Of course, Flame doesn't believe that the kobolds will succeed, but the dragon does hope that the PCs will lose most of their *protection from fire* spells and hit points in the battles, so that by the time they've opened the vault, he'll be able to kill them off easily.

However, if the kobolds do succeed in killing off the PCs, Flame has promised to reward them well. Of course, Flame's idea of "rewarding them well" is to eat them raw instead of burning them first. Flame will then take the party's magical items from the dead kobolds and go out in search of another party to open his vault.

These kobolds, therefore, are fighting for their families and the glory of victory, and will loose their entire arsenal of dirty tricks upon the party — even to the extent of sacrificing themselves in near-suicidal acts. Each area where the kobolds attack is detailed separately

within the keep, but the DM should alter their tactics if necessary to insure that the party becomes genuinely worried about where the little buggers will come from next. The kobolds have been doing these maneuvers for years, and the DM should play them as skilled, cunning, and ruthless.

Kobold champion: AC 6; MV 6"; HD ½; hp 4; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL LE; MM1/57; short sword.

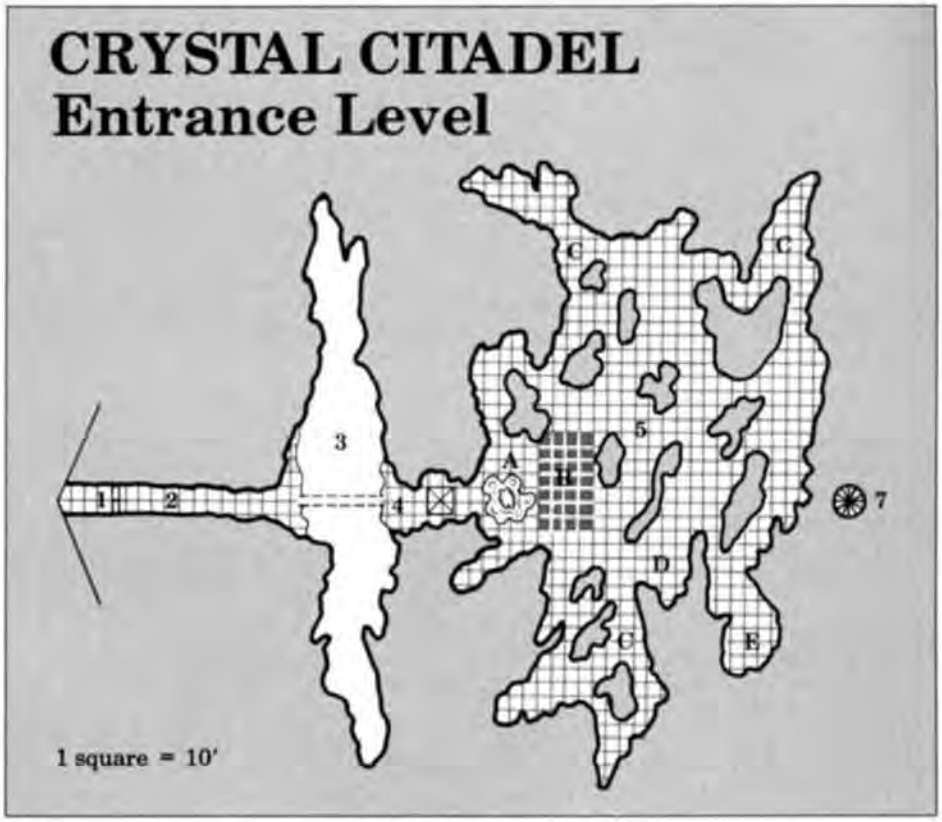
Kobold warrior: AC 7; MV 6"; HD ½; hp 3; #AT 1; Dmg 1 (bite); SA spheres from *necklace of missiles;* AL LE; MM1/57.

All kobold warriors, unless otherwise stated, carry one sphere from a *necklace of missiles.* These have been removed by Flame (see area 16) and handed to the kobolds, and are the main weapons the kobolds possess. The tactics for the use of these grenades vary from encounter to encounter, but one important point needs to be mentioned here. Since the spheres must be deliberately detonated by hurling or intentionally dropping them, a dying kobold gets the benefit of a "death blow." As PCs in this adventure will probably be capable of slaying many kobolds at will, each dying kobold is allowed a saving throw vs. death magic to activate his magical grenade before he expires.

Exploding missiles do magical fire damage according to the following table (roll percentile dice once for each kobold so armed):

d100	Dmg
01-12	2 HD
13-32	3 HD
33-48	4 HD
49-62	5 HD
63-72	6 HD
73-82	7 HD
83-88	8 HD
89-94	9 HD
95-97	10 HD
98-00	11 HD

If more than one fire missile explodes at a time, it may be easiest for the DM to assume that all missiles in the area likewise detonate. With an average of 5 HD damage per missile, even a force of 10 exploding kobolds becomes lethal indeed. The DM should assign only a percentage of the total damage to each player character within the area of effect (save for half damage still permitted). For example, someone caught on the edge of 10 kobolds exploding might save against only 10% (5d6) of the 50 HD of damage possible. However, anyone standing in the middle of the exploding kobolds would have to save against 100% (50d6) of the damage and would most likely be incinerated.



Flame's Location Within the Citadel

Up to this point, the red dragon who is the ultimate cause of the party's troubles has been lying low. Now that the PCs have arrived at the citadel, Flame steps fully into the picture.

The dragon has given standing orders to the kobolds and will remain in area 19 (see encounter description). He will not reveal himself until after the party has opened the vault (see area 28 for details).

Flame is trying to maintain the deception that two red-haired wizards live in the citadel, one who wears white and one who wears black. Actually, Flame is both of these men but is attempting to make the adventurers believe that the white-robed wizard is the nasty owner of the citadel and ruler of the kobolds, while the black-robed wizard is the PCs' benefactor, the man who is responsible for sending them on their quest. Flame needs to wear only black robes during the course of the adventure, since he has already commanded the kobolds (in white disguise), and he has left a white-robed body elsewhere in the keep. The reason for this deception is revealed by Flame after the party successfully opens the vault (see area 28).

Remember that if the kobolds or other monsters within the keep kill any party members during their assaults, Flame's opinion is that "there's always more where they came from." Should the party be entirely destroyed, Flame will have to begin his plot anew with another set of adventurers.

Entrance Level

1. The Emerald Doors. As the adventurers approach the citadel (presumably by *fly* spell or similar means), they notice that one area on the widest point of the diamond glitters green. Soon, it becomes obvious that the light comes from a pair of emerald-green doors at the end of a short tunnel. The doors are each 20' high and 10' wide. This is the only entrance to the keep while the magical forces remain in effect.

The doors can be opened by magic

(either a *knock* spell or a *chime of opening*) or the passwords "Vecna will rise again." If a spell is cast or the passwords spoken, the doors silently swing inward; after one turn, the doors automatically close again. No amount of physical force can break the *wall of force* that protects the doors, but a *polymorphed* PC or one in *gaseous form* can fit through the crack between the doors. If such a PC then stands inside the keep within 10' of the doors for just one round, the doors open and others in the party can be admitted.

The doors are merely colored quartz and are valueless.

2. Harmless Tunnel. Nothing will attack or entrap the party here. The only interesting thing about this tunnel is its smooth, man-made appearance that begins to turn natural and rough as the party gets closer to area 3.

3. The Crystal Canyon. The major flaw in the citadel crystal is a 300'-deep and 400'-wide crevasse. Opikus decided to make this crack into a "first defense" for the keep by spanning an invisible, 3'-wide bridge of force across it. Because all divination-class spells cannot function within the keep while the diamond is in area 28, the bridge can only be found by feeling for it. A fall from the bridge does 20d6 hp damage as well as additional damage for falling on sharp, hard surfaces as per the *Dungeoneers* (pages 19-20) and *Wilderness* (pages 35-36) *Survival Guides.*

Normally, this bridge would hardly be an obstacle for a party of this caliber, but the kobolds have prepared a welcome for the PCs upon their arrival.

When the party members have passed one-third of the way across the bridge, a kobold champion steps out from hiding in area 4 and openly challenges "the greatest warrior of your tribe" (in rough Common). Cavaliers and paladins must accept this challenge, but other fighters can choose to fight for the bridge or flee. The two combatants will meet at the center of the bridge, where they roll initiative and fight.

This kobold fully expects to die, since he is only laying a trap in an attempt to rid the adventurers of their best fighter. Twenty more kobold warriors wait in plain sight on the other side of the bridge, obviously awaiting the outcome of the battle.

When the kobold champion dies, the kobold warriors on the other side of the crevasse moan and groan and drop their weapons. One steps forward and offers the kobolds' services as bodyguards within the keep. This is, of course, a ruse to get the party to cross the bridge. Hidden high along the crevasse walls above the bridge are two dozen kobold warriors, tied around their middles to long ropes attached to the rock walls. They are armed with spears but have no *necklace of missiles* grenades.

If the PCs do begin to cross, the hidden kobolds swing down in an attempt to knock them off the bridge. Because they are tied to the ropes, the kobolds have the use of both hands. Each downward swing is treated as a spear charge, giving the kobolds +2 to hit and doing double damage. Kobolds that miss their targets swing back on the next round (providing the party hasn't blasted them or cut their ropes). In addition to spear damage, any hit by a flying kobold forces the victim to make a dexterity check (at a penalty of –2) to avoid falling off the bridge. Flying PCs who lose consciousness and those on *carpets of flying* are also subject to attacks and dexterity checks.

Meanwhile, the kobold warriors across the bridge pick up their spears and throw them at the PCs, hoping to bring them across. Then they go at it with claw and tooth, although kobolds do damage only with their bites. These warriors have one globe each from a *necklace of missiles* and use these to their best effect (see "The Kamikaze Kobold Corps"). None of the kobolds has any treasure.

4. Pit-Trapped Tunnel. A standard pit trap, activated by 50 lbs. or more of weight, lies in the middle of this natural tunnel. Those who fall within take 6-36 hp damage for the 30' fall and are immediately doused in burning oil for 1d6+9 hp damage per round, until 10 rounds pass or the fire is extinguished.

5. Geode Caverns. This is the residence of numerous denizens of the keep who are no longer useful (as in area 5C) or just forgotten about (areas 5D and 5E). The many crystalline stalactite-like formations are mostly natural, but some have been cultivated by the crysmals (area 5C) or set into place by the kobolds (area 5B). None of the surfaces in this cavern are protected by the *wall of force* spells mentioned earlier, although any place the party might wish to go from here is so protected, as are the outer keep walls.

5A. Water Down, Water Up. This small pool of water is apparently fed through a hole in the ceiling above. This is only partially true. Adventurers who place their hands within the 20'-diameter waterfall soon discover a "water-up" as well. One half of the stream drains down from the pool above (area 6A), while the same volume of water travels against the pull of gravity back up through the hole. The waterfall radiates weak magic.

The only way for the party to proceed deeper into the keep is to step into the "up" side of the waterfall (the side closest to the tunnel entrance). The water will gently carry them one at a time up through the hole and to the surface of the pool, 110' above. Each adventurer must hold his breath for three rounds, as the water does not convey any water-breathing abilities.

5B. Falling Stalactites. The kobolds have loosened a few of the sharper stalactites within the shaded area of the map. When several party members have moved within this region, one kobold champion, who has been hiding behind a nearby stalagmite, yells very loudly and attacks the party. The noise causes the stalactites to fall, doing 3-30 hp damage to all within the area of effect (no saving throw permitted).

5C. Crysmal Mines. Each of these three regions contains eight crysmals from the elemental plane of Earth. These creatures attack any intruders, even kobolds, and the sounds of battle with one group soon attract the others.

Crysmals (8 per area, 24 total): AC –4 or 0; MV 6"; HD 6+6; hp 42 each; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12 or 2-8; SA crystal missile; SD psionic ability, immune to many attack forms, takes one-quarter or no damage from electrical attacks, moves through stone like a xorn; AL NE; MM2/26.

If seriously wounded, the crysmals try to escape by phasing out (taking one round) and retreating into the quartz walls. The other two groups may chose to gain increased chances of surprise by attacking from the safety of the stone, at the DM's option.

These creatures originally shaped the outer and inner walls of the keep, although the magical defenses of the keep that prevent the use of spells like

ESP prevent PCs from obtaining plans of the crysmals' works. The crysmals think very geometrically and in at least three dimensions, so it is very difficult for human minds to understand them. They now prefer to cultivate little crystals (and crysmals) of their own until they are returned to their home plane (something Opikus was preparing to do before his demise).

There are 4-32 rough gems (not worth more than 50 gp each) within each crysmal. They have no other treasure.

5D. White Pudding Avalanche. A large, clear white pudding has spread itself along this cavity and is waiting for the next kobold or person to walk by. It has no treasure.

White pudding: AC 8; MV 9"; HD 9; hp 72; #AT 1; Dmg 7-28; SD not affected by acid/cold/poison, lightning bolts and blows split creature into smaller versions; AL N; MM2/102.

5E. Boris the Spider. This poor phase spider has been trapped inside the block of quartz that is now the keep for ages, as the citadel's protective magicks prevent him from phasing out to escape.

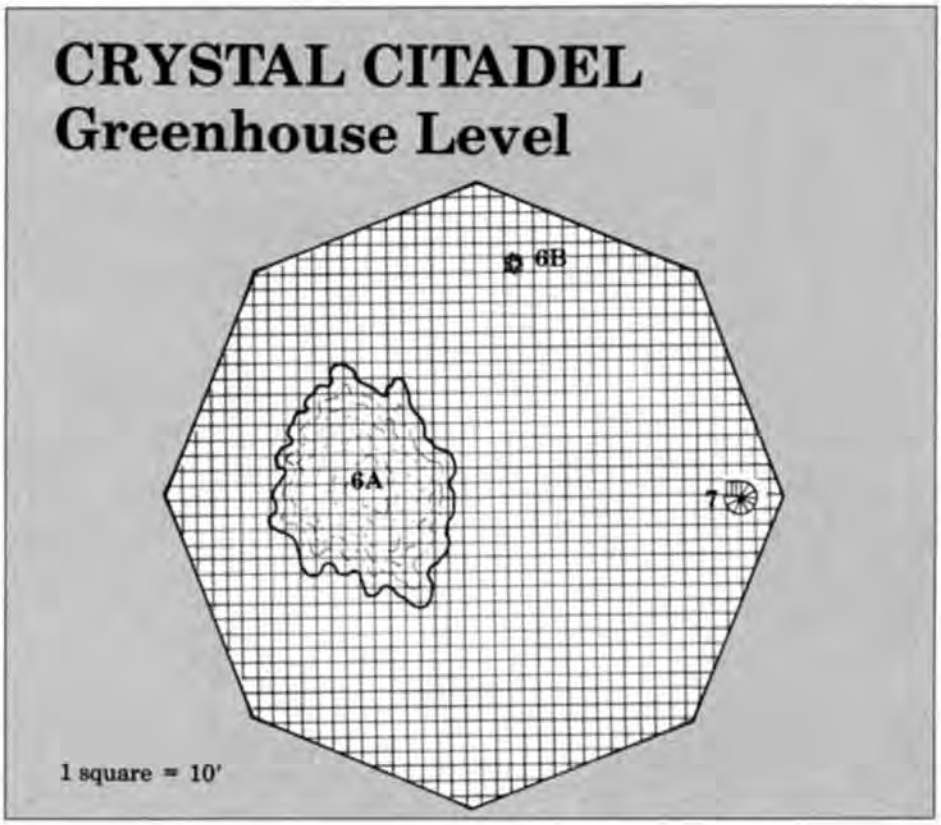
Boris: AC 7; MV 6"*15"; HD 5+5; hp 45; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA phase shift, save vs. death poison at –2; SD impervious to almost all attacks when out of phase; AL N; MM1/90.

Originally, Boris was the only inhabitant of the huge block of quartz, but no one bothered to ask his permission before it was moved from the elemental plane of Earth (where he had made his home). Before he woke up enough to figure out what had happened, he was trapped by the citadel's spell enchantments. Boris has no interest in attacking the PCs and has no treasure. If the PCs offer him a gemstone of 5,000-gp or greater value, he tells them about the crysmals, the water elevator (area 5A), and some information about the quartz palace (how he woke up to find himself here, and how he is no longer able to leave the area).

If Boris is still alive when the giant diamond is removed from the vault (area 28), he immediately *phases* to the Ethereal plane and sets up a new web somewhere far, far away.

Greenhouse Level

6. The Greenhouse. The entire upper level of the citadel is covered in earth



and is home to hundreds of plants and trees. A greenhouse has been created with fresh running water (area 6A) and plenty of sunlight streaming in through the crystal roof. The temperature is quite warm within, almost tropical, in stark contrast to the freezing winds above the keep and the molten lava below.

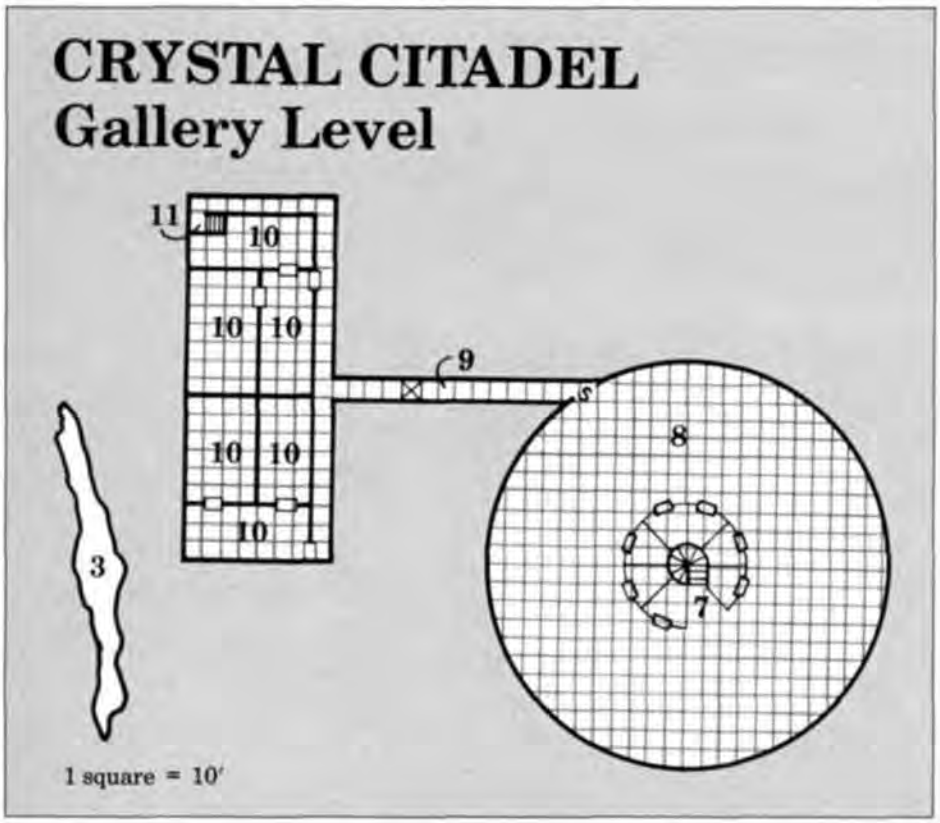
This is a most homelike environment to the kobolds, who know how to survive in forests (like Nograheim) very well. Because of this, the kobolds are most dangerous here. There are 50 kobold warriors armed with short bows hiding in here, all camouflaged and almost completely silent (treat as natural *cloaks* and *boots of elvenkind*). In addition to the normal –4 AC bonus for being effectively invisible, the kobolds also have a –2 to their armor class for the cover of the thick brush, giving them each an effective armor class of 1.

These kobolds are each equipped with a quiver of 10 arrows and shower the party with them from the relative safety of the thick underbrush. If the party is having too easy a time of it here, the kobolds throw a few grenades (the *necklace of missiles* balls). However, the kobolds avoid this option as much as possible because of their fondness for the small forest. The kobolds will, however, immediately begin drawing the party toward area 6B and the monster plants that live there.

At night, the kobolds cover themselves with a layer of cool, wet leaves, making the warriors invisible to infravision as well as normal sight (this covering must be refreshed every hour to be effective). None of the kobolds has any treasure.

6A. Pool of Water. Water is magically kept flowing from this pool down to the pool below (area 5A). Party members who stand near the hole in the bottom of the pool are either pushed away or sucked down, depending on which side they are on. A descending PC takes no damage while using the waterfall unless he forgets to hold his breath. The amount of water that evaporates into the greenhouse ecosystem is magically replaced when necessary.

6B. Monster Plants. The kobolds fear these tri-flower fronds and giant sundews, and will try to lead the party here so that they can slit the throats of sleep-



ing adventurers and gang up on the struggling ones left standing. None of the plants have any treasure.

Tri-flower fronds (12): AC 9; MV nil; HD 2+8; hp 24 each; #AT 3 plus special; Dmg special; SA slumber poison, rotting enzymes, hit-point draining; AL N; MM2/121.

Giant sundews (4): AC 7; MV 1"; HD 8; hp 64 each; #AT special; Dmg 1-3 and special; SA clogging sap; SD tendrils worsen victim's "to hit" rolls; AL N; MM2/116.

7. The Ruby Staircase. This magnificent red crystal spiral staircase is concealed with a permanent *hallucinatory terrain* spell that makes it look like a large oak tree stump. The staircase is not magical and leads down 175' to the gallery (area 8).

Gallery Level

8. The Gallery. This huge circular chamber serves two purposes. Ringing the staircase walls (area 7) are seven cages which have been enchanted to be immune to magic. These cages served as Opikus's personal bestiary. Just before the party arrived, Flame ordered a kobold to pull the levers that open the doors of the three occupied cages. The kobold, of course, died instantly — but now the PCs are in for one heck of a deadly fight.

The cages formerly held a vampire and his earth-filled coffin, a medusa and a stone kobold, and one very angry beholder who was taken in by an anti-magic trap. The three monsters are most interested in escaping but are not above killing others and getting some treasure on the way out. They do not particularly like each other but hate adventurers (especially wizards like Opikus) more. All three concentrate their attacks on any wizard in the party, each hoping that the other two will deal with the fighter types. None of these monsters have any treasure.

Vampire: AC 1; MV 12"/18"; HD 8+3; hp 60; #AT 1; Dmg 5-10; SA energy drain, charming gaze; SD regeneration, +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to many attack forms, takes only half damage from cold- or electricity-based spells, can assume bat or gaseous form at will; AL CE; MM1/99.

Medusa: AC 5; MV 9"; HD 6; hp 48; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA gaze turns to stone, poisonous bites; AL LE; MM1/66.

Beholder: AC 0/2/7; MV 3"; HD 16; hp 75; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA magic; SD anti-magic ray; special magic resistance; AL LE; MM1/10.

Once the PCs have dealt with the bestiary, they can turn their attention to the gallery. Hanging on the outer wall of this huge circular room are dozens of paintings. Ten of them are famous stolen art works and worth 10-60,000 gp each. However, they can be returned by good PCs for a reward of 10% of that value. The other 27 paintings are even more valuable but are incredibly dangerous. Each of them is a tremendously lifelike portrait of a demon lord or elemental prince. Opikus used his *mirror of mental prowess* and spies to get images for the pictures, and a cantriplike spell to do the actual renderings. The paintings are all accurate down to the smallest detail and resemble modern-day photographs. It is very likely that the uncompensated "models" will attempt to recover and destroy the paintings if they are removed from the safety of the citadel.

A secret door behind a self-portrait of Opikus leads to area 9. Flame's version of Opikus looks nothing like this painting, but a party member must actually state he is reading the name plates that are affixed below all the paintings to notice this discrepancy.

9. The Long-Way-Down Tunnel. The kamikaze kobolds return with a new and improved means of harassing the party. As the PCs enter this corridor, a little kobold's head peeks around the corner (at the intersection near area 10) and squeals (in Kobold), "They're coming! Run!" The little kobold then disappears behind the corner again.

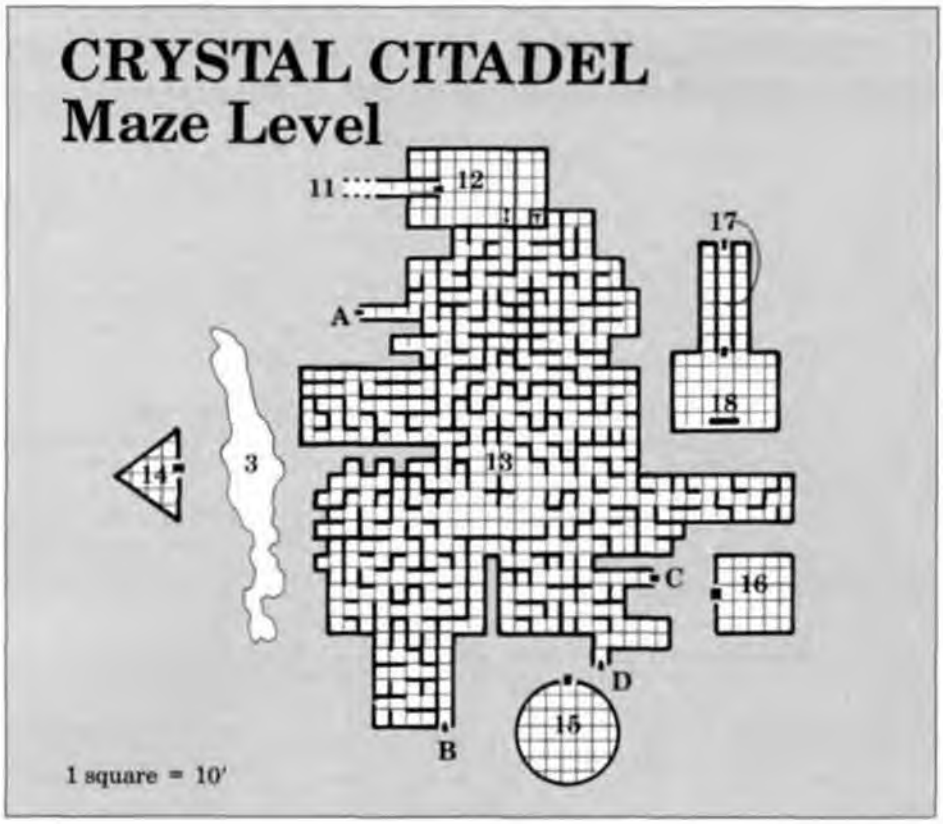
When the party has proceeded about halfway down the corridor, 10 kobold warriors begin running across the far end of the corridor, shooting at the party with short bows and then diving for cover (–7 to armor class while criss-crossing). Five kobolds run across from one side, while five more run from the other. For each shot fired by the kobolds, roll to determine the target. A "to hit" roll then determines whether the chosen PC is hit. If a kobold rolls a natural 1 to hit, he has injured one of his companions running the other way.

The criss-crossing kobolds, while somewhat effective, are just a ruse to draw the party forward onto the pit trap that lies

about two-thirds of the way down the tunnel. A weight of 50 lbs. or more causes a 12'-long section of the box-shaped walls, ceiling, and floor to drop free from above. This "cage" immediately begins free-falling down a long chute, right out of the keep and into the lava pool below.

On the way down, the walls of the chute will make any PC feel he is trapped within a solid quartz box, but just after leaving the chute, the PC can jump out through one of the open sides. A free-falling PC has two segments of action before hitting the lava. A *feather fall* spell immediately cast will slow the PC's fall but not prevent him from hitting the molten rocks below. An adventurer who remains in the open stone box takes 20d6 hp damage from the fall (as the box strikes the lava, he strikes the box) as well as having to worry about the molten lava pouring in for 6-60 hp damage per round.

As soon as the pit trap is activated, the remaining kobolds drop their bows and throw one *necklace of missiles* grenade each at the remaining party members. The activation of the pit trap opens a new entrance/exit to the citadel, which might become important to the rest of the party later on in the adventure.



10. Storage Rooms. These are miscellaneous storage rooms filled with provisions, bags of cheap spell components (like charcoal, glass, sand, etc.), and furniture. The DM should fill these out as necessary. There is nothing of much value in these unlocked storerooms.

11. Stairway. These stairs lead down to area 12.

Maze Level

12. The Bunkers. When the party opens the door to this room, a hail of 30 crossbow bolts are fired at the first PC in line. High in a bunker behind the far wall are 30 light crossbows, all tied to one trigger. Thirty kobolds warriors (–4 to armor class while hidden in bunkers) man these weapons by restocking them with crossbow bolts (six bolts per crossbow in arsenal). Therefore, as many bolts will fire at the party per round as there are kobolds alive in the bunker, and all the bolts left can be fired as long as one kobold survives (but only one crossbow can be armed per round per kobold). A stone ladder leads up the far wall beneath the bunker.

The party can clear out this bunker with *one fireball* spell, or it can try to take it by force. In either case, once the bunker is wiped out and the PCs have entered the room, 30 more kobolds in a second bunker (opposite the first one and directly above the doorway) drop *necklace of missiles* grenades on the adventurers.

None of the kobolds have any treasure. The ones in the rear bunker have climbed up a rope, which they promptly pulled up behind themselves. In addition to the wall ladder, the first bunker can be exited through a trapdoor which leads directly into area 13.

13. The Invisible Maze. This is the crysmals' favorite accomplishment, a massive maze of crystal-clear walls. Because divination spells cannot be used within or on the keep and its component parts, this maze must be passed through the hard way. Within the maze are four magical *teleport* doors (labeled A, B, C, and D) which transport to areas 14, 15, 16, and 17 respectively. The DM may decide to include some invisible monsters, mirrors, or traps within the maze as well. There is no treasure in the maze.

14. The Game Room. This poshly furnished triangular chamber is filled with various games of skill and chance, including magical roulette wheels, body-building sets, a chess set in midplay, a dart board with six *darts +2* stuck in it, a billiards table, etc. There is one well-dressed flesh golem on duty here who is skilled in all of these games and is quite harmless unless provoked.

The golem's name is Jeeves, and he has the equivalent of 18(00) in any one ability score during a game (i.e., intelligence for chess, dexterity for darts, strength for weight lifting, etc.) While using any one ability in a game, Jeeves's other attributes revert to 10. For example, if someone decides to wrestle Jeeves, they find him very strong but not very dextrous or bright. Jeeves is never very wise or attractive, but he is always friendly. He wears green robes with silver trim and will not attack unless attacked first.

Jeeves (flesh golem): AC 9; MV 8"; HD 9; hp 40; #AT 2; Dmg 2-16/2-16; SD immune to normal weapons and most spells except fire- and cold-based ones, electrical attacks heal damage; AL N; MM1/48.

An invisible archway identical to those found in the maze leads back to area 13A.

15. The Conjuring Room. A flaming circle of *protection from demons* occupies the center of this circular chamber. The large number of braziers, candelabra, and other summoning devices indicates that a very powerful demon is meant to share that spot. Whether it has already been summoned or not is impossible to determine from the contents of the chamber.

Actually, the demon was summoned some time ago and is currently trapped within the vault (area 28). For brief spans of time, Opikus could temporarily deactivate the spell protections on his keep without causing it to collapse. He only performed this dangerous feat when he needed to summon something.

An invisible archway identical to those found in the maze leads back to area 13B.

16. The Laboratory. This square room is filled with laboratory equipment and spell components. One large table has nothing on it except the remains of 30 silver necklaces which used to be *necklaces of missiles* before Flame removed the globes. The kobolds are now using them as little grenades.

Opikus had been making these necklaces for years and was preparing to arm a small force of henchmen with them for his final trip to recover the real *eye* and *hand of Vecna* (location unknown). He also liked to scry upon his enemies, reach his hand through his *mirror of mental prowess*, then throw a few *missiles* inside, often assassinating the victim and all possible witnesses in one fell stroke. Since most rulers and powerful wizards are protected from scrying and divination spells, this trick was only useful for petty assassinations or the removal of some upstart wizard.

No magical items remain in this room, but the place is filled with fine-quality glassware, cauldrons, and spell components. A wizard's *bag of holding* will be quickly filled by all the rare spell components, and the sages in Justiminium will pay handsomely for some of the rarer ones (DM's discretion).

An invisible archway identical to those found in the maze leads back to area 13C.

17. The "Albert Hall." This is the last defense of the kamikaze kobold brigade. Their families are near, and no amount of sacrifice is too great to achieve glory in their name. The *teleport* door opens onto a hall that is honeycombed with small holes through the walls and ceiling. Sixty **kobold warriors** (–10 to AC for complete cover) attack the party from inside the hollow walls, throwing grenades and shooting arrows. The PCs can retreat through the invisible archway, but eventually they must succeed here to go on through the remainder of the dungeon.

The door at the end of the hall leads to area 18, while an invisible archway identical to those found in the maze leads back to area 13D.

18. Kobold Lair. Any kobolds not killed through the small holes of area 17 will enter area 18 and engage party members to the last. Once these kobolds have been dealt with, the party will see a room filled with 112 kobold women and children (as unarmed warriors with 1 hp each), all cowering in the corners. They will not attack or even fight back under any circumstances. If interrogated, they can reveal that their mates were fighting for a red-haired wizard who wore white robes. The kobolds have no treasure.

A huge black crystal portal stands against the far wall of this room. It is 10' wide and 10' tall, carved from quartz, and looks like a gaping demon's maw. While the demon part is translucent, the inside of the maw is an inky opaque black. Party members can look behind the portal, as it stands about 2' away from the wall, but the inside of the demon's mouth is completely transparent from behind.

Stepping through the portal is harmless and *teleports* the voyager to a similar portal in area 19.

The entire passageway of area 17 is visible from this room, as there is a 10'-wide area hollowed out to both sides of, and above the corridor, permitting the kobolds access to the murder holes (see area 17).

Vault Level

19. The Study. This room is entered through a demonic-looking black portal identical in appearance and operation to the one in area 18. The room is paneled in cedar and contains a huge fireplace, oaken desk and chair, and many fine rugs scattered about the floor. To the right of the PCs as they exit the portal is the fireplace, in which a fire is burning. The hearth goes completely through the wall into area 21 and is large enough to crawl through, provided one is protected from normal fires. This passage can be used as an alternate entrance or escape route in an emergency. Blocked from view initially by the fireplace mantle (as the party enters through the portal) is an oaken door which also leads to area 21.

The archway opposite the fireplace leads to area 20 and is sealed with a *wall of force*. On the wall to the right of the archway is a small keyhole, and lying upon a comfortable chair nearby is the small silver key needed to deactivate the *wall of force*.

Beside the archway, on the side closest to the PCs as they first enter, is an oaken desk that holds four carefully bound spell books. Each book contains one level of magic-user spells from first to fourth level. The books contain all spells of each level, but the higher-level books were specially made and are of huge size (and are proportionally heavy and inconvenient; see *Unearthed Arcana*, page 79). The desk contains no important papers or clues.

Directly across from the party is an easel and paint brush (but no palette or paints) positioned beside an ornate golden floor-length mirror. The easel and brush are nonmagical, as Opikus used a spell to do his art works (see area 8).

Beside the easel is the *mirror of mental prowess*, a very powerful scrying device which is partially sentient. In fact, the command word to activate the *mirror* is "Voltantiskir," which translates to "O knowledgeable one" in the demons' tongue. Because of its demonic origin, the *mirror* radiates strong magic and faint evil but is in fact neutral in disposition. Washing the *mirror* with holy water will remove all traces of evil and allow a good being to use it with a clear conscience. Because of Opikus's unique enchantments, the *mirror* is unaffected by the keep's magical protections against scrying and *teleporting*, save that it cannot be used to *teleport* into the vault.

All the items within the study are top-quality goods, but there is no other treasure within the room other than the *mirror* and the spell books.

Flame waits in this room while the party explores the keep. He constantly scries on the PCs (using the *mirror*) until they head into the demon portal to arrive here. Flame then steps through the *mirror* into another part of the keep, well behind the party, and waits for the alarm to sound (see area 28). The exact location he chooses depends on what traps or

monsters the PCs have left behind (as witnessed by Flame). When the dragon needs to make his entrance (see area 28), he can either return through the *mirror* or make his way to the portal at area 18.

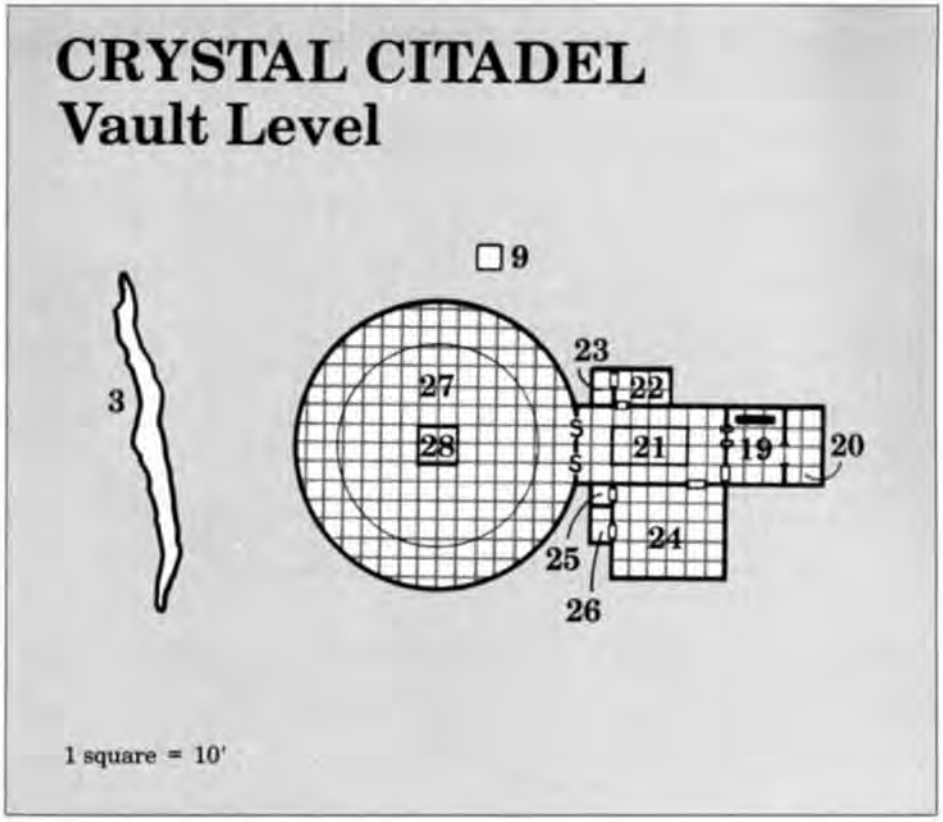
20. Frozen Library. This was Opikus's private vault of books, kept in subfreezing temperatures to preserve them from decay. The books are specially prepared so that they don't gather moisture when thawing or freezing. In addition to a large selection of material devoted to the elemental planes, the citadel, the arch-lich Vecna, and famous beings from the outer planes, Opikus also kept all of his spell books in here. The first- to fourth-level spell books are out on the desk in area 19, but the others are a pile of ash in the middle of the floor.

Opikus trapped all of his spell books from levels six to nine, and Flame accidentally set them off while flipping through them. In the pile of ash, however, is the remaining volume of fifth-level spells (identical to those mentioned at area 19). Flame can cast spells of first to fourth levels only, so this book is currently useless to him and he discarded it on the floor. The books are very valuable to a sage or the party magic-user, and the DM should fill them out as necessary for the campaign.

Lying beside the pile of ash are six frozen elves, all neatly stacked like cord wood. These are "snacks" brought here by Flame, who likes to have something to munch on while he reads. If resurrected, the elves know only that they were hired by a wizard with red hair and white robes to help around the keep. They went to sleep one night and never woke up again. The small slash marks on their bodies are identifiable as coming from kobold swords.

The cold within this room cannot pass through the magical wall of force, but if the wall is deactivated (using the silver key) and the archway left open, the entire ancient collection will slowly thaw out and begin the natural process of decay. The escaping cold air will cool all of area 19 quickly, but nothing will be harmed.

21. Dining Room. There is a huge, 20' wide by 40' long dining table in the center of this room, completely laid out in beautiful silverware and china. A chandelier hangs from the ceiling, and the fireplace that communicates with area 19 is burning brightly. Beside the fireplace is a door which also leads to area 19.



In the wall at right angles to this one is another door, slightly ajar, which leads to the bedroom (area 24). On the opposite wall at the far end of the room is a swinging door that leads to the kitchen (area 22).

On the wall opposite the fireplace is a pair of huge secret doors, each about 20' wide and 20' high. These doors are disguised to look like the lower two-thirds of the wall. They are shielded from spells and can be found only by normal, physical means (1 in 6 chance to spot the crack between the doors). The massive doors open only when both are pushed simultaneously.

The china and silverware sets are worth 20,000 gp total. The chandelier, while beautiful, is made of glass and is worth only 500 gp. If the chandelier falls on someone, it does 3-30 hp damage.

The room is paneled and furnished like area 19. There are no other objects of value within.

22. Kitchen. Opikus was also an accomplished chef, and this kitchen is outfitted with all sorts of magical cookware, including self-heating stoves and cauldrons that stir themselves. A large rack of spices and condiments lines one wall, while the cupboards are filled with typical kitchen trappings. The DM can fill out this room as necessary with magical items like *Murlynd's spoon* and *Zagyg's flowing flagon* (see *Unearthed Arcana*, pages 101 and 104).

A small doorway on the left as one enters the room leads to the pantry (area 23).

23. Pantry. This room is filled with sacks of food, hanging haunches of salted meats, and casks of water and ale. A covered box serves as a small magical freezer (value 5,000 gp, weight 50 lbs.). Inside are some elf and kobold remains. There is nothing else of value in here.

24. Bedroom. This richly appointed bedroom is huge, as Opikus liked to have plenty of space. The bed in the center of the room is buried in uncut diamonds (from area P), and the body of a red-haired, white-robed man lies in a pool of blood nearby.

The body is that of Flame's "apprentice," a third-level wizard who was hired by Flame because he looked a lot like the dragon's *polymorphed* merchant form. The magic-user obviously died of many spear wounds, and the bloody tracks of

kobold feet are everywhere. He has been searched and stripped of all possessions. The apprentice strongly resembles the Opikus that hired the party (except for the color of his robes) but looks nothing like the Opikus painting in area 8 (remember, the real Opikus was eaten by Flame a long time ago).

The PCs are free to draw any conclusions they wish, but this discovery should cause them to believe they have solved the mystery of where their host has been all this time. The diamond pile is Flame's new bed, and the two or three thousand stones here are relatively valuable (base value 10 gp).

Atop the pile of diamonds is a book which contains descriptions of the various treasures inside the vault (including the huge diamond that controls the citadel), although most details are not given, only hinted at. Flame has been perusing this tome for many months now, aching for a chance to toy with the items sealed inside the vault. The DM should give the PCs a few scraps about the treasures in order to whet their appetites (see area 28).

Two doors to the rear of this chamber lead to a bathroom (area 25) and a robing room (area 26). There is little of value in here other than the diamonds.

25. Bathroom. A pleasant, magically heated bath is always running here. Selective *disintegrate* spells take care of all clean-up. There is nothing of value here.

26. Robing Room. This huge walk-in closet is filled with magnificent clothing of all colors and materials. None of it is magical, and there is nothing else of value here. The 28 suits of clothing here are each worth 200-1,200 gp.

27. The Rollerballs. This great circular chamber is dominated by a huge, bowl-shaped depression in the floor. In the center, at the bottom of the bowl, is a circular golden vault door with three dials numbered from 1 to 101 and a turning wheel on it.

If any party member enters the bowl, a 3'-diameter golden sphere appears from nowhere at the rim of the bowl and begins chasing the PC. These balls seem to defy natural laws, rolling both uphill and downhill, and changing course to follow the PCs every zig and zag, but never leaving the bowl. Each ball "locks on" to one PC and will not chase any other. The type of sphere is determined by rolling 1d6 and consulting the following list:

1 Explodes when within 10' of its target, doing 3-30 hp magical cold damage.
2 Explodes when within 10' of its target, doing 3-30 hp magical fire damage.
3 Explodes when within 20' of a target, hailing the target in sharpened metal spikes which do 4-40 hp physical damage.
4 Must roll to hit as a 10-HD creature. If the ball hits, the target must save vs. paralyzation or be immobilized for 2-5 rounds.
5-6 Illusion of one of the four types above (roll 1d4).

The damage from the rollerballs can be lessened by *rings of protection* and other spells and devices (e.g., *protection from normal missiles* for type-three spheres), but the illusory versions can be avoided only by successfully disbelieving them.

The balls roll around the bowl at 12" speed. Their speed is halved to 6", however, while traveling uphill but doubled to 24" while rolling downhill. Therefore, characters with a movement rate of less than 12" cannot run fast enough to escape the spheres.

One rollerball per round appears for each PC within the bowl, so it is possible to have more than one ball per person rolling around the bowl (although the balls always avoid each other). PCs *paralyzed* by type-four spheres are subject to additional rollerball attacks as long as they remain within the bowl or until they are dead. The only way to stop the rollerballs is to correctly open the vault (area 28).

28. The Great Vault. The vault door described in area 27 is completely false. A full set of locks and bars has been installed to maintain the deception, but they are merely to draw the attention of some unlucky thief or wizard who must come into the rollerball bowl to try to open the door. The three dials can be opened only by three successful *open locks* rolls (at –50% each), but the vault refuses to open even after the last fake lock has been "picked."

The door is immune to force, magical items (like the *mirror of mental prowess*), and all spells except the fifth-level magic-user spell *passwall*, which is the only way to enter the vault. This is the only place in the keep where a *passwall* spell will work while the diamond is in place.

Therefore, the only way to enter the vault is to fly or *levitate* to within 30' of the vault door and cast a *passwall* spell on the door. Because *passwall* is only the triggering spell and does not itself open the passage, the vault "door" will remain open for one full day before magically sealing again.

If the party wizard does not normally carry this spell, he can find it in Opikus's fifth-level spell book buried in the ashes at area 20. The DM can allow the floating wizard to read the spell from the book (as outlined in *Unearthed Arcana*, page 80), but under no circumstances should the DM suggest this option, as the PCs should spend a great deal of their time, effort, and spells on this puzzle.

When the vault is finally opened, the PCs will have little time to peek inside. An alarm clangs throughout the keep, sounding like thousands of ringing bells. The alarm alerts Flame to return, and he watches the action through the secret doors of area 21.

Geldoran, a type VI demon, immediately jumps out and begins blasting, stomping, and tromping anyone nearby. Although the keep's magical defenses prevent Geldoran from using his *gate* ability to bring in any friends to help out during the battle, he should still be quite a challenge for the party. Geldoran immediately cloaks the area in magical *darkness* and uses *telekinesis* to move the party's strongest-looking warrior into the dining room (area 21). Geldoran will catch the closest individual (probably the opener of the vault) with his whip and draw him into his burning flames. Geldoran is smart enough to weaken party members before using his magical *symbols* on them.

If the DM feels Geldoran is too weak an encounter alone, the demon can be beefed up by adding two or three type III demons as his personal entourage. These demons are not *gated* in by Geldoran during this battle, but were brought in with him when he was summoned (see area 15).

Geldoran: AC –2; MV 6"/15"; HD 8+8; hp 72; #AT 1; Dmg 2-13; SA psionic ability, whip and flame for 4-24 hp damage, spell powers; SD psionic ability, +1 or better weapon to hit, standard demon immunities and spells; 75% magic resistance; AL CE; MM1/19.

Type III demon: AC –4; MV 9"; HD

10; hp 80; #AT 5; Dmg 2-12/2-12/1-3/1-3/2-5; SA psionic ability, spells; SD psionic ability, spells, standard demon immunities, 60% magic resistance; AL CE; MM1/18.

Geldoran was promised possession of the huge diamond if he agreed to guard it for 1,000 years. It is his intention to offer the jewel to as many greater demon lords (i.e., Demogorgon, Juiblex, Orcus, etc.) as are interested, bargaining for a chance to become a lesser demon lord or prince in his own right (a gift only another demon lord can bestow). The greater demon lords want the diamond for the same reasons as the other forces of evil do, as a sign of power or as a magical spell or item component.

Once the PCs have defeated the demons, they should be in very bad shape — but not bad enough to prevent their taking a peek at the treasures within the vault. Floating in the middle of the 20' cube is a rough diamond block about the size of a human head. It is completely stationary in space, which makes it appear to be rotating slowly counterclockwise (as viewed from above), since the keep is rotating clockwise around it. The great diamond is magically lit from within and shines chaotic rays of harmless light everywhere.

The diamond is the heart of the keep and can be removed only by grabbing it with bare hands. The diamond itself is harmless, but as soon as it is pulled more than 1' from its resting place, the light within dims, the protection spells on the keep fail, and the keep falls toward the lava below in two segments.

Any PCs still inside the keep cannot escape through any of the openings in the citadel, since the palace immediately sinks beneath the lava like a rock dropped into water. However, since the citadel's protective spells have been shut off, and it takes several minutes for the keep to melt, the adventurers have five rounds to grab their things and *teleport* out, turn ethereal, etc. Spells like *stone shape* and *passwall* will operate within the keep once the diamond is moved, although they will do little good for the party as the citadel is surrounded by a sea of molten lava. If the PCs encase themselves in a spherical *wall of force*, that spell will last long enough for the bubble to float to the surface once the keep has melted around them. Party members must still deal with oxygen and heat concerns while inside the bubble. See "Concluding the Adventure" for more ideas on what might happen to the PCs after the citadel falls.

Beneath the diamond, on the floor of the vault, is Opikus's private treasure hoard. Most of the magnificent items within were of little use to Opikus while adventuring, or were placed here in safekeeping to be used at a later date.

A sailor's lantern is shining brightly in one corner but is overshadowed by the great diamond above. This magical lantern shines with the light of a double-strength *continual light* spell (save at –4 if light is used as a weapon) and always remains lit. The light cannot be dispelled except by a *wish* or similar magic, although the lantern's four shutters can be slid into place. If the lantern is set on a flat surface and then slowly turned clockwise, it will be set into permanent motion. By opening only one shutter and using this feature, the lantern can be used as a makeshift signal beacon. Hidden inside the hollow lantern is a *medallion of thought projection.*

Several *cursed* objects sit in an unlocked chest as if they were meant to be a spare set of adventuring gear. In the chest are a *necklace of strangulation,* a *ring of protection –3,* a pair of *bracers of weapon attraction* (all attacks on the wearer are at +4 to hit), and a *robe of powerlessness.* Opikus meant to give these items to a really close friend.

A rack of three powerful weapons (useless to a wizard) dominates one wall of the vault. Included are a dwarven *throwing hammer +3;* a *broad sword +4, defender;* and a *sun blade.* None of these weapons are intelligent, but each of them has a long and impressive history, and the return of any one of them to the civilized world would be a major accomplishment. All three recovered together, however, will be considered a great omen by the outside world, and any fighters in the party will be able to gather additional followers (10% bonus to normal allotment) as the warrior guilds and societies send their personal blessings to the adventuring lords.

On a shelf, gathering dust, is a life-size silver statue of a pseudo-dragon, apparently worth 5,000 gp. This sculpture acts like a *figurine of wondrous power,* except that if a *find familiar* spell is cast in its vicinity, the statue automatically comes to life and answers the summons (provided that the caster is not evil). All benefits of the dragon familiar are lost when in statue form, but this creature can only be truly slain if the statue form is destroyed (see the *DMG,* page 144, for more on this phenomenon). The silver pseudo-dragon can remain in living form for but 12 hours per day, after which it must rest an equal period of time. Opikus, being evil, was unable to alter the disposition of the little dragon to his needs.

A pair of *saddlebags of holding* (100 lb. weight allowance and 150 cubic feet volume limit each) contains a set of *leather barding +3,* a *saddle blanket of warmth* (acts as a *ring of warmth),* and a pair of *horseshoes of speed.* Opikus's last horse died in a rockslide, and he researched the *fly* spell immediately thereafter.

There are also 10 random useful potions and 10 random scrolls (not necessarily useful) on a bench awaiting identification. The potions defied Opikus's early attempts with the *identify* spell, and the wizard never opened scrolls himself; he always hired apprentices to take the risks.

The DM may wish to add or delete items from this list, depending on the nature and level of the party members and possible conflicts with the DM's own campaign. As always, the DM, not the dice (or the author) decides the treasure. Also, the diamonds scattered around the area were enough for Opikus, and there should be plenty left for the party. Therefore, there is no money (other than the great diamond) within the vault.

The adventurers will have little time to contemplate these vast treasures, for as soon as they move anywhere near the great diamond, Flame appears. Until now, Flame has remained hidden within the keep (see area 19), but it is now time to play his final hand. While disguised as Opikus (with the red hair and black robes), he appears behind the party (at the secret doors between areas 21 and 27). Read the following to the players:

> "I wouldn't touch that if I were you!" you hear from behind yourselves. Turning quickly, weapons drawn, you see the red-haired, black-robed merchant who hired you to go on this expedition.
>
> "If you remove that diamond, you'll send this entire citadel falling into the lava below. We'll never get out alive. But forgive me. I owe you an explanation. Follow me back to the dining room and I will answer all your questions. We have one last

mission to perform." The merchant turns around and walks through the doors and out of view.

If the party fails to follow him, Flame will do his best to convince them. "Come, now. The diamond's not going anywhere. You can keep your weapons drawn; I'm on your side, remember?" should do the trick. When the PCs decide to enter the dining room again, read the following:

As you enter the dining hall, you notice that the table is fully set with food and drink, and the merchant is sitting at the head of the table in front of the fireplace, sipping wine from a crystal goblet.

"Take a seat or stand, but enjoy the food; you've earned it. I made it myself, so I hope you like it.

"In any case, you will have noticed my dead brother in the white robes lying in the next room. This is the true reason why I could not aid in your quest, as wizards are never really as frail as we'd have others believe. My brother and I were incapable of harming one another. Some mystical accident at birth made us immune to the magical and physical attacks of one another. He chose the dark path and I the light. Curious how we both wore the wrong colors, eh?

"You can see from his library that he too was interested in obtaining Vecna's remnants, but I — we — succeeded first, and now they are safely destroyed forever. I needed you to destroy my brother in the process. Little did I know that this nasty little band of kobolds would have beaten us to it. Who would have thought?

"Now our journey is ended, and all we must do is wait for our ride to arrive. There is, however, one last task I'd like you to perform. But enjoy your meal first. I'll hold you in suspense a while yet."

The food is delicious and very safe. Flame used some of the magical food devices in the kitchen to prepare the dishes while the party was busy. If the PCs are intent on asking questions, indicate that the merchant is eating and they should too. The ride Flame mentioned is just another ruse, like the entire story about his brother and Vecna.

As soon as the PCs have checked the food and begun to eat, Flame jumps up onto the dining table as his *polymorph self* spell deactivates. At the same time he releases a breath weapon (returning to one's natural form from a *polymorph self* spell is not considered a round's action; Flame can breathe fire in the same round as he shifts back to dragon form).

A bump from the front of the table reveals that the merchant is now standing on top of the dining table. Suddenly he begins growing larger, screaming "Dinner is served! Dinner is served!" Horns grow from his widening skull, his clothes fade away, huge wings fold out from behind him,

and his skin turns dark red and scaly. As the huge red dragon forms before your eyes and fire explodes from his mouth, you recognize the almost-forgotten sounds of Flame.

Flame, a huge ancient male red dragon: AC –1 (–2 with *armor* spell); MV 9"/24"; HD 11; hp 88 (107 with armor spell); #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/3-30; SA fear aura, breath weapon, magic use; SD magic use, saving-throw bonuses, detect invisible and hidden opponents within 80'; AL CE; MM1/33; spells (at 11th level of magic-user ability): *magic missile* (x2), *reduce* (x2), *invisibility, mirror image, vocalize, web, slow, dimension door.* Flame has a *stoneskin* spell and an *armor* spell cast on himself from days before, and cast a *polymorph self* spell (3 hours and 40 minutes duration) only a hour ago. He also cast *haste, fly,* and *protection from good 10' radius* spells on himself just before he went to speak with the party (so these spells should be in effect for 14, 140, and 22 rounds respectively).

Flame possesses the following magical items:

A *ring of wizardry* (doubles first- through third-level spells) worn on his right foreclaw.
A *ring of warmth* worn on his left foreclaw.
An *amulet of protection against detection and location* worn around his neck on a platinum chain (worth 2,500 gp).
A *bag of holding* (500-lb. size) hanging around his neck on a leather thong.

Inside the *bag of holding* are five 10,000-gp diamonds (Opikus's personal treasure) and a *cloak of protection +2,* which Flame can wear only when in human form.

Flame has had extensive experience with magical items and magic-user spell books and is capable of using spells like any other magic-user, although he is still limited in the number and levels of the spells he carries as per an ancient red dragon (wearing a *ring of wizardry,* of course).

When Flame returns to his dragon form, the dining table immediately collapses under his weight, crushing any PCs seated at the table for 6-36 hp damage and pinning them there, unless a saving throw vs. paralyzation is successful (reducing damage by half and letting PCs move freely).

Flame's first breath attack should take the PCs completely by surprise, but this must be decided by the DM. Remember that Flame wants them all dead and will wait if necessary for his revenge. He can always return again another day as he knows where the adventurers live.

If Flame ever loses half his hit points, he says "Good-bye for now!" and uses his *dimension door* spell (1 segment casting time) to escape into the rollerball room (area 27). He'll hide in the great bowl, unseen unless someone thinks to look for him there. This should give him enough time to surprise the party again or cast *invisibility* and *reduce* spells to escape through the *mirror of mental prowess* in area 19.

If hopelessly trapped within room 27, Flame grabs the great diamond, hoping that the adventurers will flee for their lives. The party may then assume that Flame has gone down with the citadel as it melts in the lava. However, the dragon should still have enough time to cast a *reduce* spell and step through the *mirror* (or some other unthought-of escape route) to safety.

If Flame defeats the party and one or more PCs are unconscious but not dead, the DM can continue the adventure by allowing those PCs to crawl out of the lair while the dragon is asleep (leaving behind all treasure and equipment, of course) to return for revenge at a later date. Even after 400 years of hunting, Flame still forgets to check his meals to make sure they're truly dead.

Concluding the Adventure

If Flame escapes, the PCs have a lot to worry about, since he knows everything about them including the locations of their keeps, the names of their henchmen, etc. Flame will begin new, even more devious plans now that he has been foiled not once but twice by the same group of adventurers.

If the party was trapped in the crystal citadel when it sank into the lava, or floated up in a *wall of force,* the adventurers may pass out from the heat, only to awaken on the elemental plane of Fire or Magma, in the home of some powerful being there (either friendly or unfriendly). The citadel will have gone down the lava drain in the western branch of area Q, where it was transported in toto. Disgruntled natives (fire or magma elementals, efreeti, or xorn) investigated the melting ruins and pulled the party free (a successful divine intervention check might also do the trick). Refer to the *Manual of the Planes* for more on the inhabitants of the inner planes.

Since there is no way the adventurers can keep the citadel and spend the diamond at the same time, should they defeat Flame, the PCs must choose whether to take the fully furnished "million-dollar showplace," or the big rock. If the party decides to destroy the keep, dealing with the gem will be a major adventure in itself. Imagine the trouble in trying to find one of the few beings capable of cutting such a gem. Perhaps it can be done only by an ancient dwarf or elf who has been missing for centuries. What bank can handle such a transaction all at once? And who else might be interested in obtaining the diamond? With great wealth comes great responsibility and danger.

Also, the knowledge the PCs have gained about the arch-lich Vecna might put them on the trail of the real artifacts, which must be returned to the Ring of Flame for final destruction.

Since the PCs probably have all the wealth they need, at this level of play and from the lesser diamonds scattered around the valley, the master diamond could best be used as a major sacrifice to the adventurers' patron deities or other powers. Increasing subsequent rolls for divine intervention, allowing increased progression in levels by PCs who have reached their limit, or a bonus point on a PC's primary attribute are but a few examples of how the gods of good might show their pleasure at this worthy gift. The DM must be the final arbiter in this matter, as only he knows the worthiness of the party and the nature of the campaign and its pantheons.

As with all adventures, this is merely the beginning. Ω

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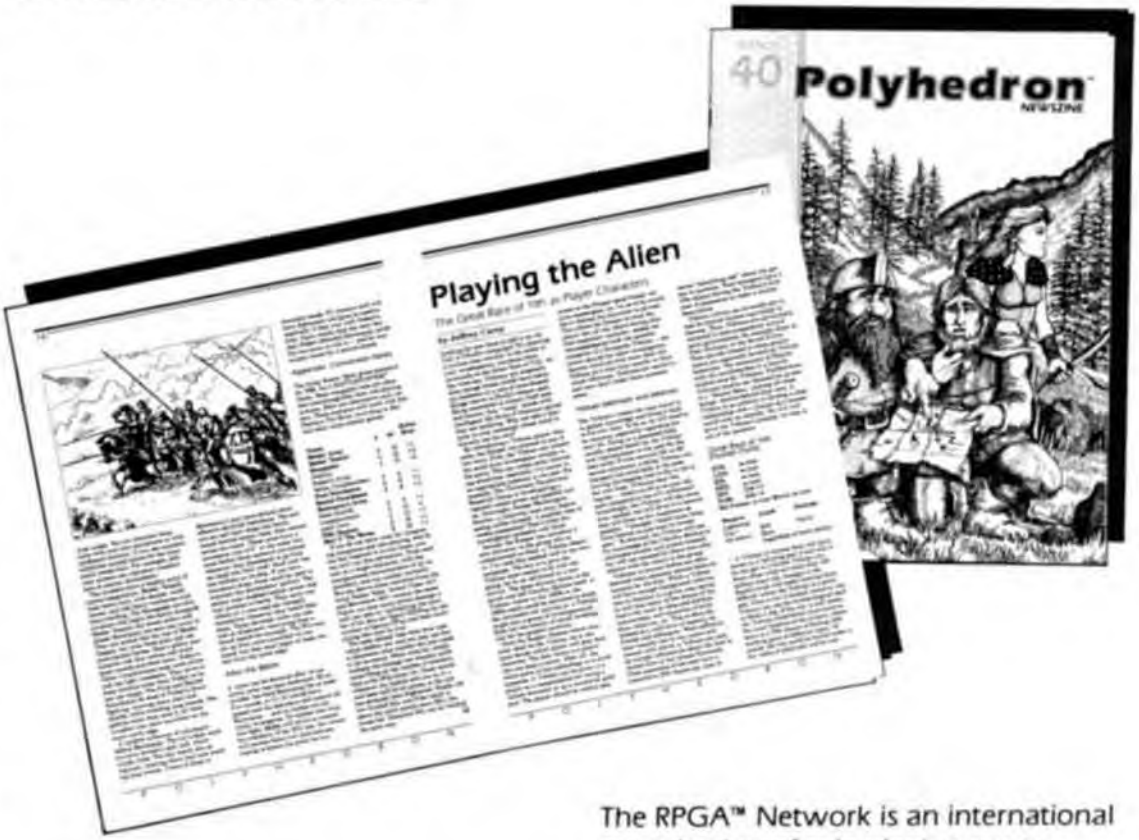

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